

Giacomo Bevilacqua

THE SOUND OF THE WORLD BY HEART



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WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY GIACOMO BEVILACQUA

LOCALIZATION AND EDITING BY MIKE KENNEDY

THE SOUND OF THE WORLD BY HEART

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WITHOUT YOU
I WOULDN'T HAVE LIVED IN NEW YORK,
I WOULDN'T HAVE FOUND THE WORDS,
I WOULDN'T HAVE WRITTEN THIS BOOK,
I WOULDN'T HAVE STARTED STUDYING AGAIN,
I WOULDN'T HAVE DEFEATED MY FRUSTRATION,
I WOULDN'T HAVE DISCOVERED THE COLORS,
I WOULDN'T HAVE ASKED ANYONE
TO MARRY ME
AND NO ONE WOULD HAVE ANSWERED:

"YES! BUT LET'S KEEP IT OUR LITTLE SECRET, OKAY?
DON'T GO TELLING EVERYONE LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO."

SO THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU,
BECAUSE IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU,
FROM MY WINDOW,
I WOULD STILL SEE THE WORLD IN BLACK AND WHITE.



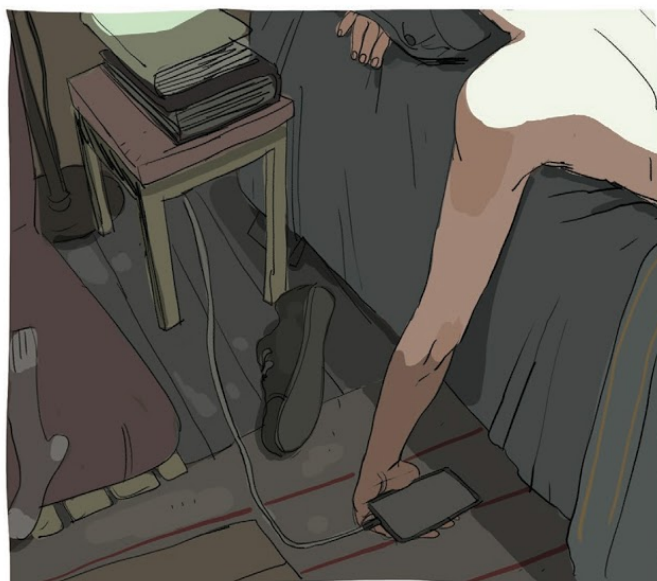
MANHATTANHEDGE
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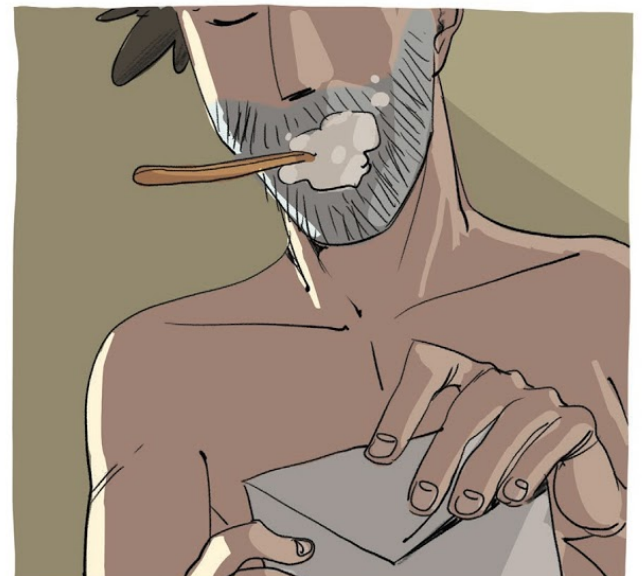
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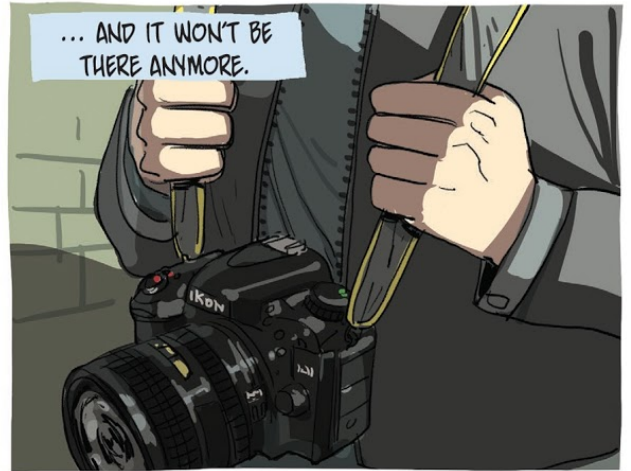
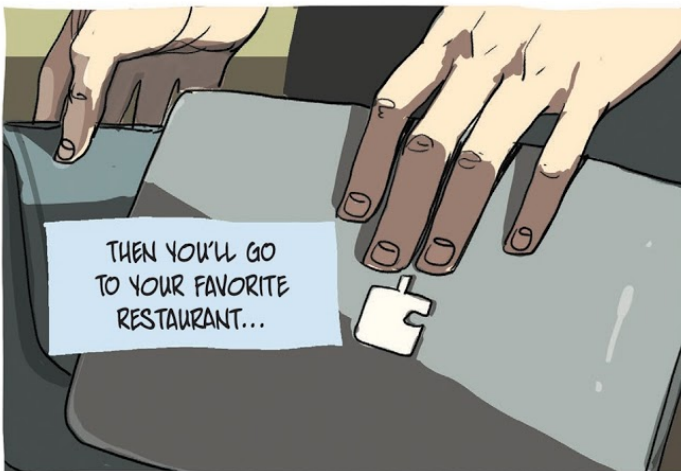


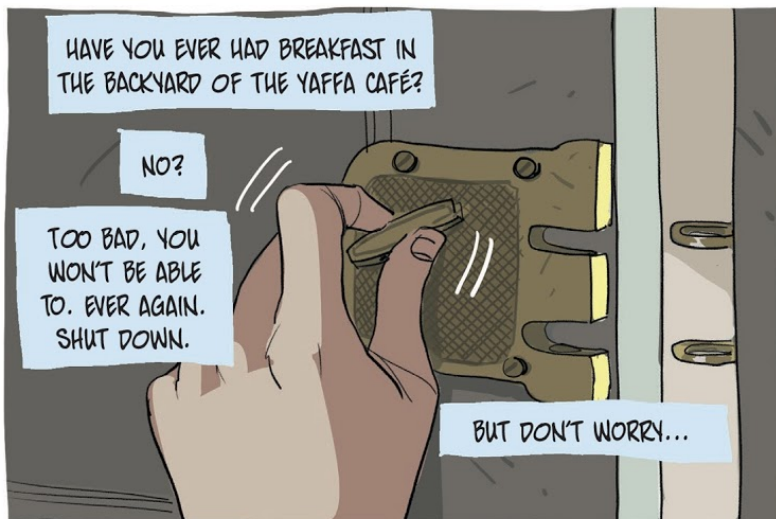


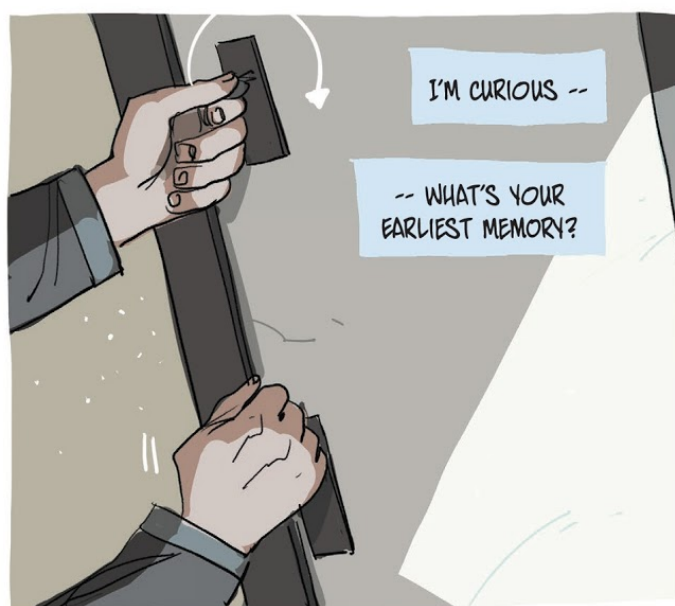
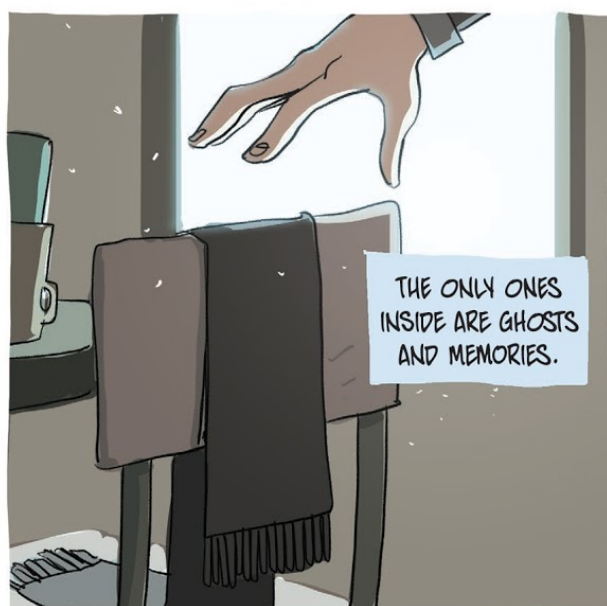


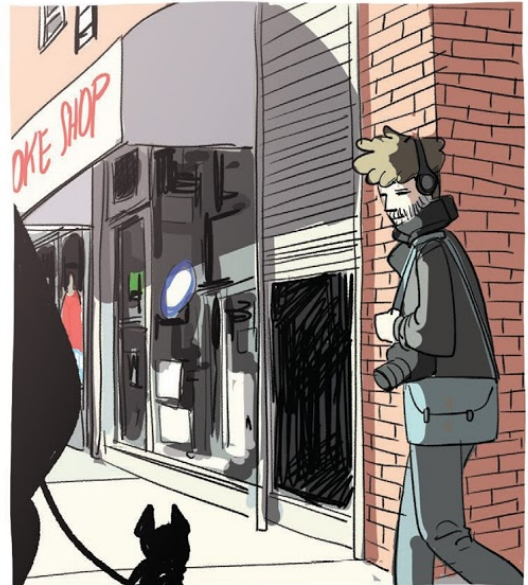


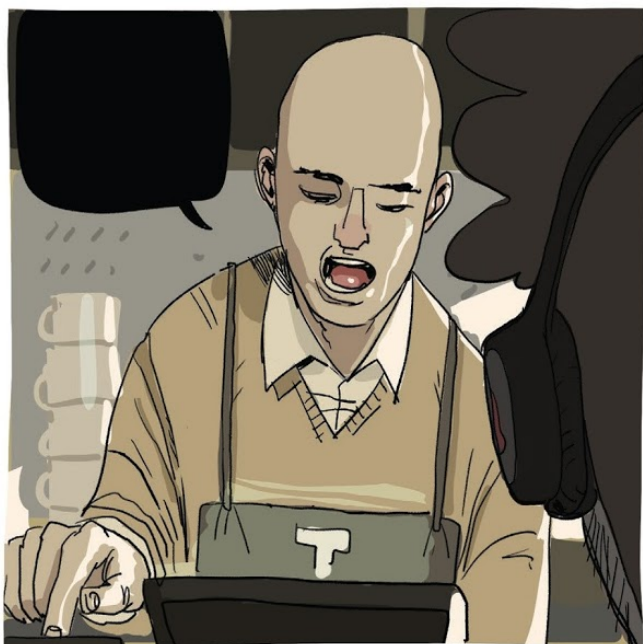


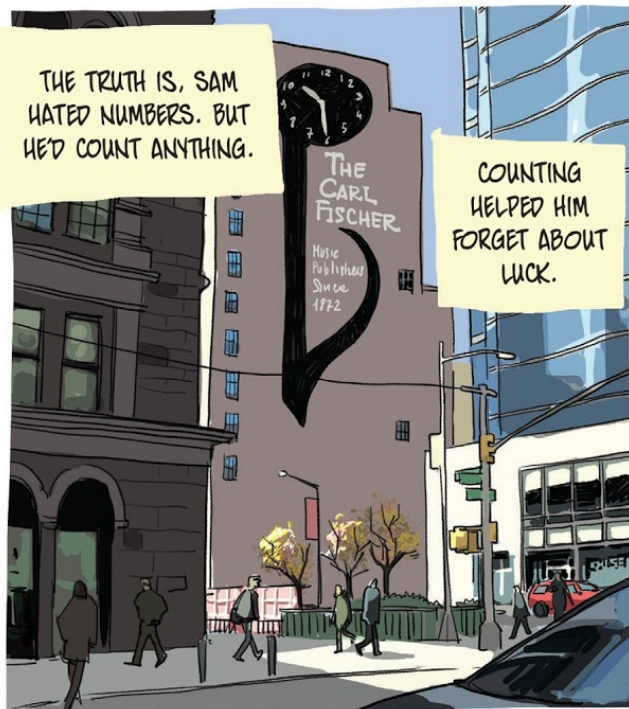






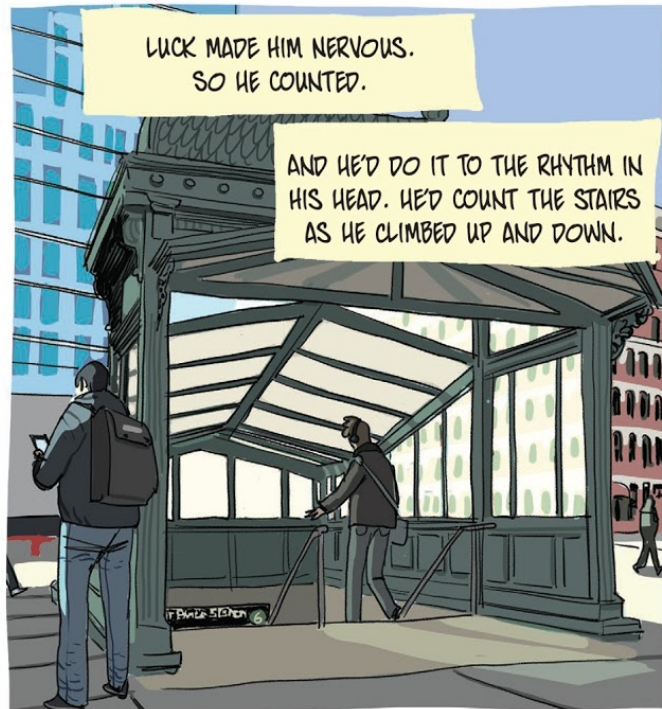






THE TRUTH IS, SAM HATED NUMBERS. BUT HE'D COUNT ANYTHING.

COUNTING HELPED HIM FORGET ABOUT LUCK.



LUCK MADE HIM NERVOUS. SO HE COUNTED.

AND HE'D DO IT TO THE RHYTHM IN HIS HEAD. HE'D COUNT THE STAIRS AS HE CLIMBED UP AND DOWN.



HE'D COUNT THE SECONDS BEFORE FALLING ASLEEP.



HE'D COUNT THE MINUTES BETWEEN EACH TRAIN.

ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR...

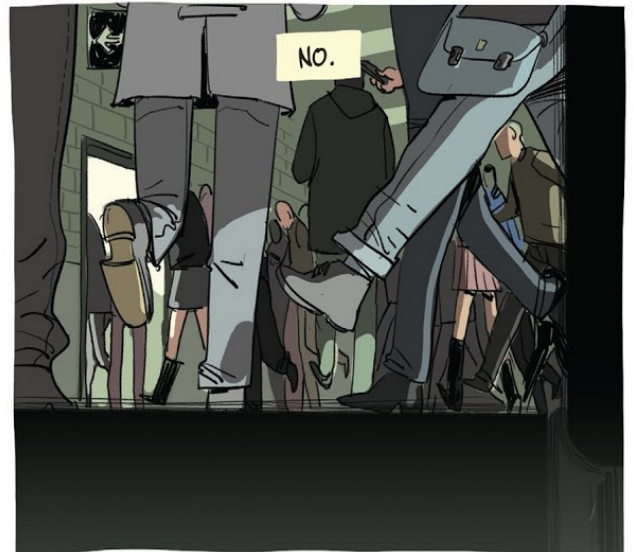


THIS LATEST NEW YORK ADVENTURE ALSO BEGAN WITH COUNTING.

SPECIFICALLY, HOW MANY PEOPLE TALKED TO EACH OTHER.



NOT ON THE PHONE.

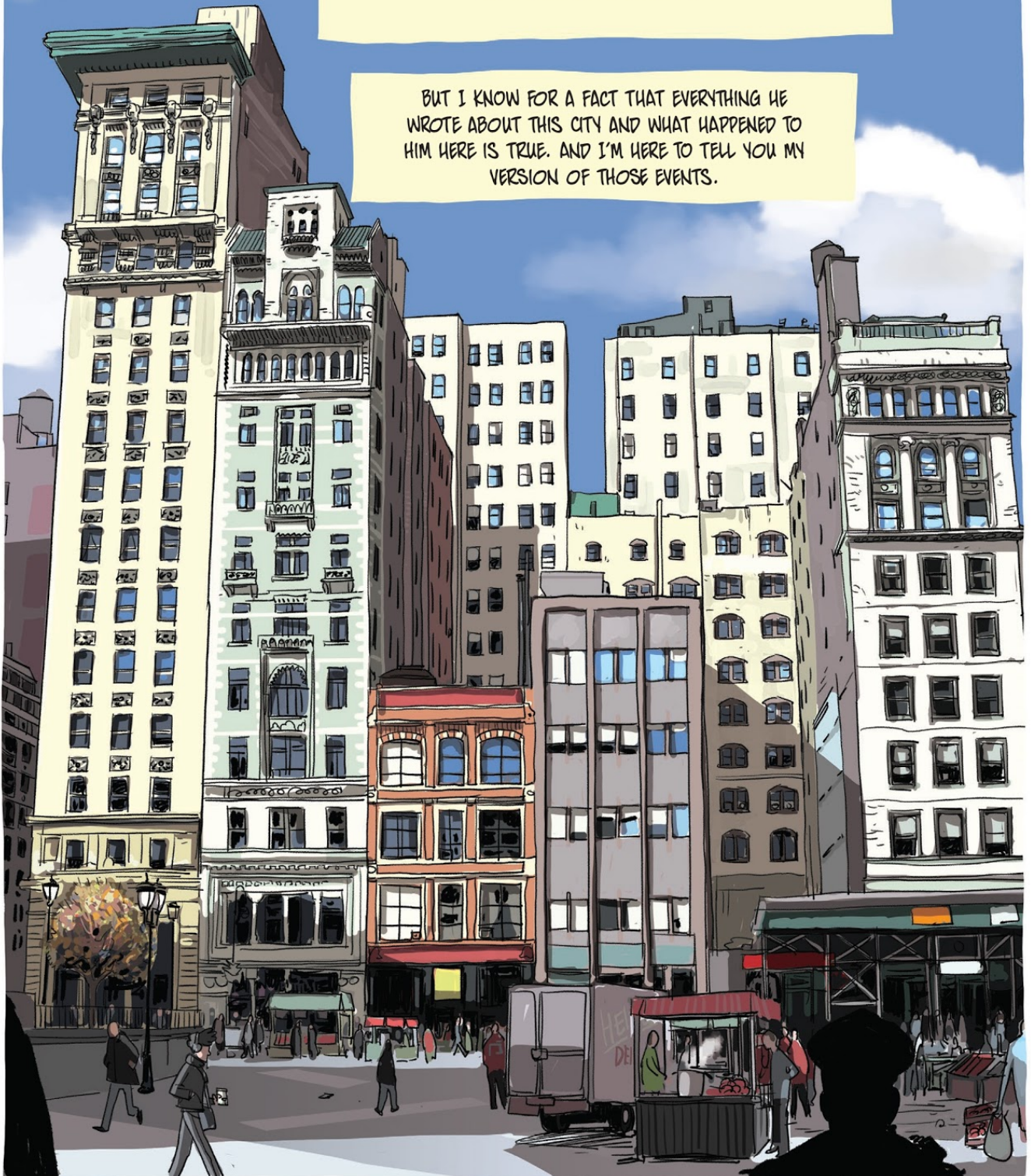




WHEN I SAID SAM STARTED THIS LATEST NEW YORK ADVENTURE COUNTING,
IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY OTHER PLAN WHERE TO BEGIN.

HIS ARTICLE WAS PRETTY SUCCESSFUL WHEN IT CAME OUT.
MAYBE YOU READ IT. A LOT OF PEOPLE DID.
BUT A LOT OF THEM THOUGHT HE WAS CRAZY, TOO.
MAYBE YOU'RE ONE OF THEM,

BUT I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT EVERYTHING HE
WROTE ABOUT THIS CITY AND WHAT HAPPENED TO
HIM HERE IS TRUE. AND I'M HERE TO TELL YOU MY
VERSION OF THOSE EVENTS.



FIVE MILLION, THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE
THOUSAND SECONDS.

EIGHTY-NINE THOUSAND, TWO
HUNDRED AND EIGHTY MINUTES.

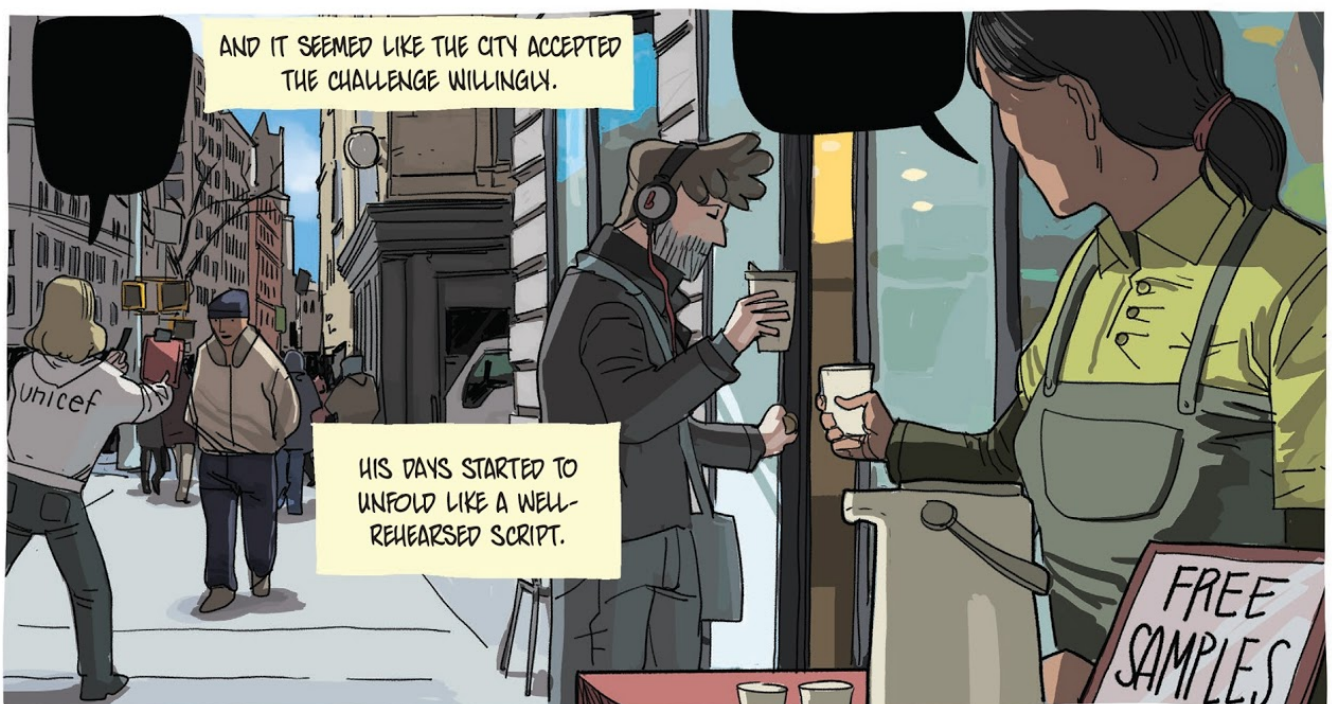
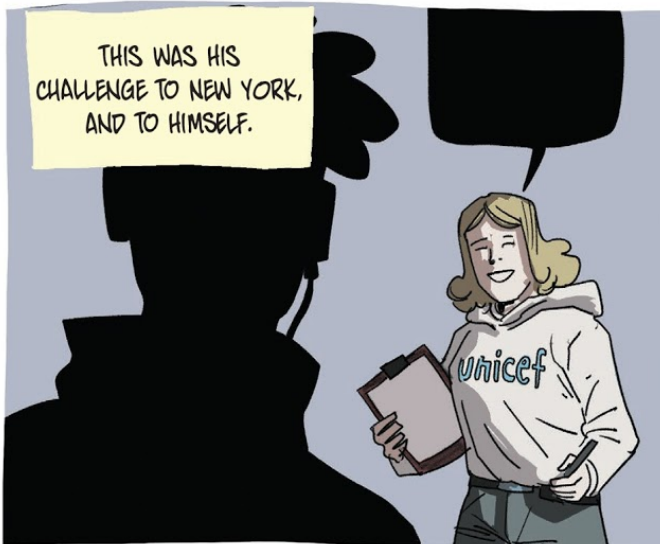
ONE THOUSAND, FOUR
HUNDRED AND EIGHTY
EIGHT HOURS.

SIXTY-TWO
DAYS.

IT DIDN'T MATTER HOW MANY
TIMES SAM REPEATED THOSE
NUMBERS IN HIS HEAD, THEY
ALWAYS EQUALED THE
SAME THING:

TWO
MONTHS.

THAT'S HOW LONG HE WAS GOING TO
SPEND IN MANHATTAN, IN THE VIBRANT
HEART OF NEW YORK CITY.



AT LEAST UNTIL
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER
15TH...



...A MONTH AFTER HIS ARRIVAL,
AT WHICH POINT EVERYTHING CHANGED...



...BUT LET'S START FROM
THE TOP.

THE ONLY PERSON
SAM WAS ALLOWED TO
COMMUNICATE WITH WAS
HIS EDITOR, JORGE.

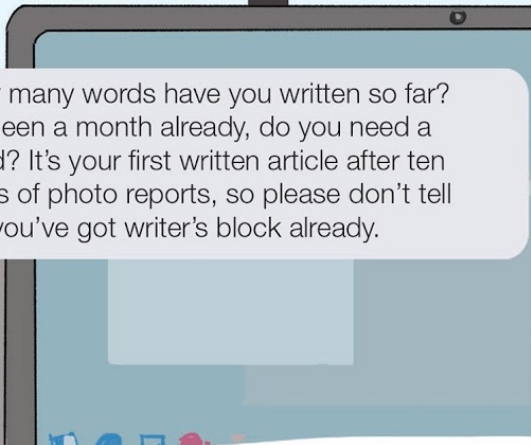


THEY WERE ONLY ALLOWED TO CHAT BY TEXT,
AND ONLY IN THE MORNING (MOSTLY BECAUSE
OF THE TIME DIFFERENCE).



NORMALLY, IT WOULD START WITH
JORGE ASKING HOW THE ARTICLE IS
COMING ALONG.

How many words have you written so far?
It's been a month already, do you need a
hand? It's your first written article after ten
years of photo reports, so please don't tell
me you've got writer's block already.



THEN HE'D PASS ON MESSAGES
FROM HIS FAMILY.

Your mom is asking if you're
okay, and how you're eating.

She says if you get sick
you should take some
nightshade.

Crush it up in some boiling
water or something.

I dunno.



BUT THEN HE'D FLY OFF WITH HIS OWN COMMENTARY.

Dude, you're 29 years old. You should tell your mom you've replaced
all that voodoo stuff with actual medicine...

You know, stuff that actually helps. Remember when you were 15 and she
called that witch doctor because you had the runs all month?



AND THAT'S WHEN THE CONVERSATION WOULD INEVITABLY END.

Yeah, that's why Sophie and Mom never got along.

Come on, Sam.
Don't go there.

She was the one, Jorge.

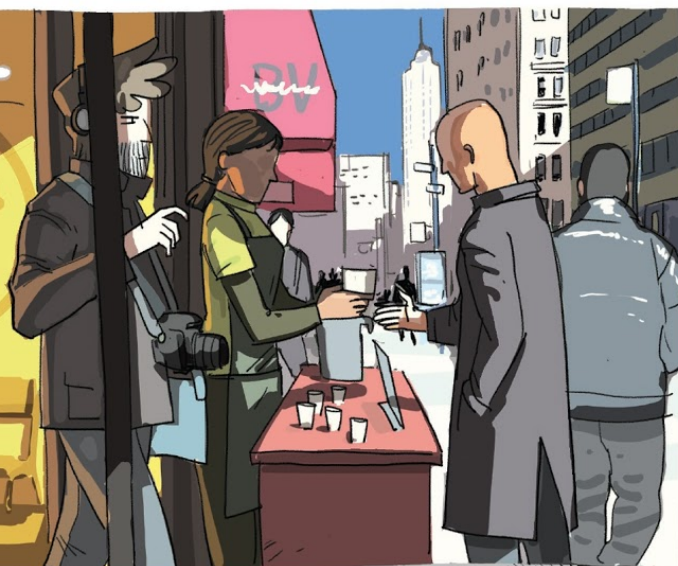
In her own way, maybe. I'm not saying to forget her, all I'm saying is there's a reason you're there doing what you do. This article, the challenge, the pictures... speaking of pictures --

I gotta go, I only came here for the free wifi and it's about to get busy.

Okay, but yesterday you wrote --

Yeah, I'm heading to the print shop to pick them up now. Sorta nervous to see them, but don't worry. Chat with you tomorrow.

SAM AND JORGE STARTED THEIR MAGAZINE FOR FUN AFTER GRADUATION. BUT NEITHER OF THEM EXPECTED IT TO GO FROM HOBBY TO JOB SO QUICKLY.

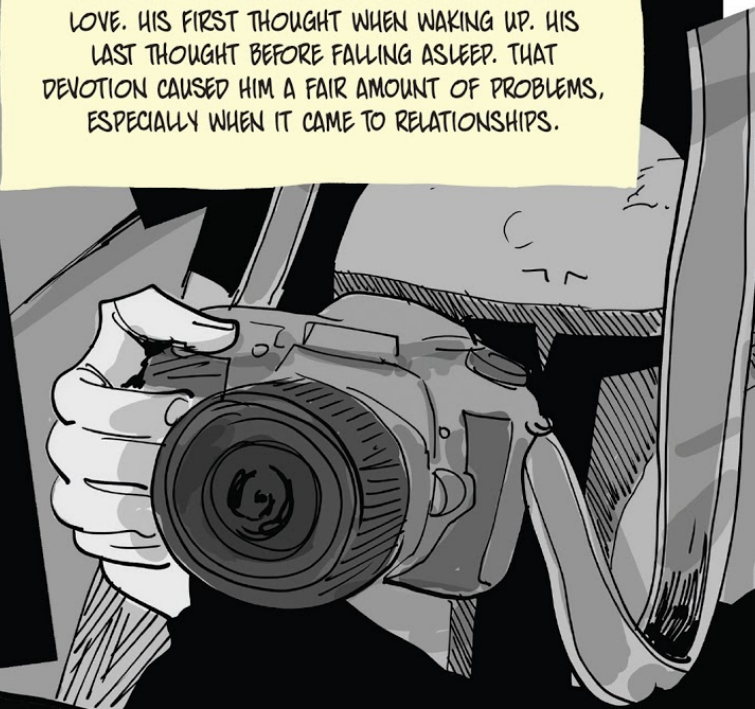
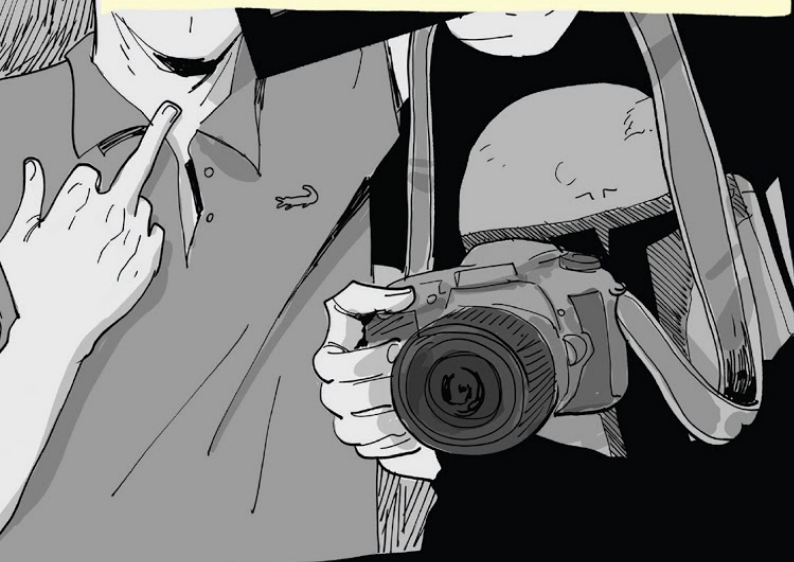


WITHIN SIX YEARS THEY BECAME A PRINTED WEEKLY MAGAZINE WITH A DAILY ONLINE COMPONENT, WITH A FULL STAFF AND NETWORK OF FREELANCERS.

WITHIN TEN YEARS... WELL, WITHIN TEN YEARS NOT MUCH CHANGED, EXCEPT MAYBE LOSING A FEW READERS. BUT SAM AND JORGE WERE STILL JUST AS ENTHUSIASTIC AND PASSIONATE AS THEY HAD BEEN AT THE START.

SAM HAS ALWAYS BEEN A PHOTOGRAPHER, AND HE ALWAYS CONSIDERED IT MORE THAN JUST A JOB.

PHOTOGRAPHY HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS GREATEST LOVE. HIS FIRST THOUGHT WHEN WAKING UP. HIS LAST THOUGHT BEFORE FALLING ASLEEP. THAT DEVOTION CAUSED HIM A FAIR AMOUNT OF PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT CAME TO RELATIONSHIPS.





SOPHIE WAS NO EXCEPTION.



BUT IN HER CASE, HE
REALLY TRIED HIS BEST.
HE MADE A REAL,
GENUINE EFFORT.



BUT SOMETIMES, THINGS DON'T
GO THE WAY YOU WANT.



HIS PAIN HAD ALREADY STOLEN A
FEW MONTHS AWAY FROM HIM WHEN HE
DECIDED TO RUN AWAY.



BECAUSE EVERY TIME HE HAD TO FACE SOME KIND
OF PAIN, THERE WAS ONE THING HE WAS ABLE
TO DO WITH SOME CLARITY:

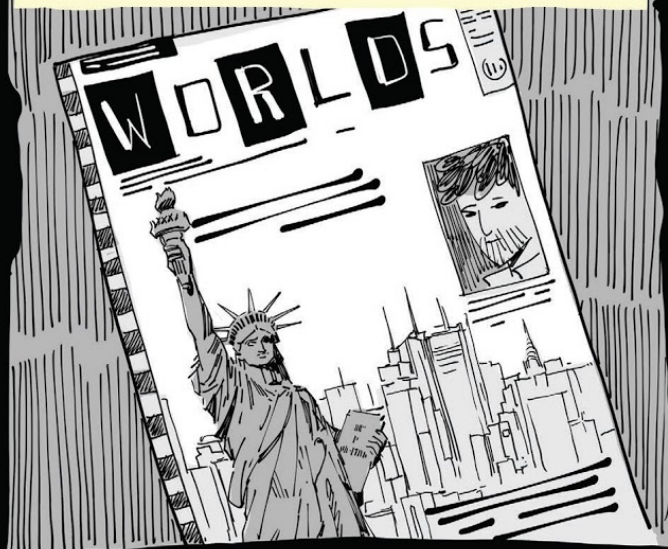
August



PACK A SUITCASE FOR
NEW YORK.

October

THAT'S WHEN JORGE SUGGESTED THE ARTICLE. THE MAGAZINE WOULD PAY FOR SAM'S "JOURNEY OF RECOVERY," AND HE WOULD TURN IT INTO A CHALLENGE TO HIMSELF, AND AN ARTICLE FOR THE MAGAZINE.



22
"...A CHALLENGE TO MY INABILITY TO COMMUNICATE, TO MY MISANTHROPY, TO MY CONSTANT NEED FOR A CHALLENGE."

THAT'S A LINE FROM THE ARTICLE ITSELF.

"... A CHALLENGE TO RESPECT THE RULES ONE PLACES UPON HIMSELF, WHETHER HE LIKES THEM OR NOT..."



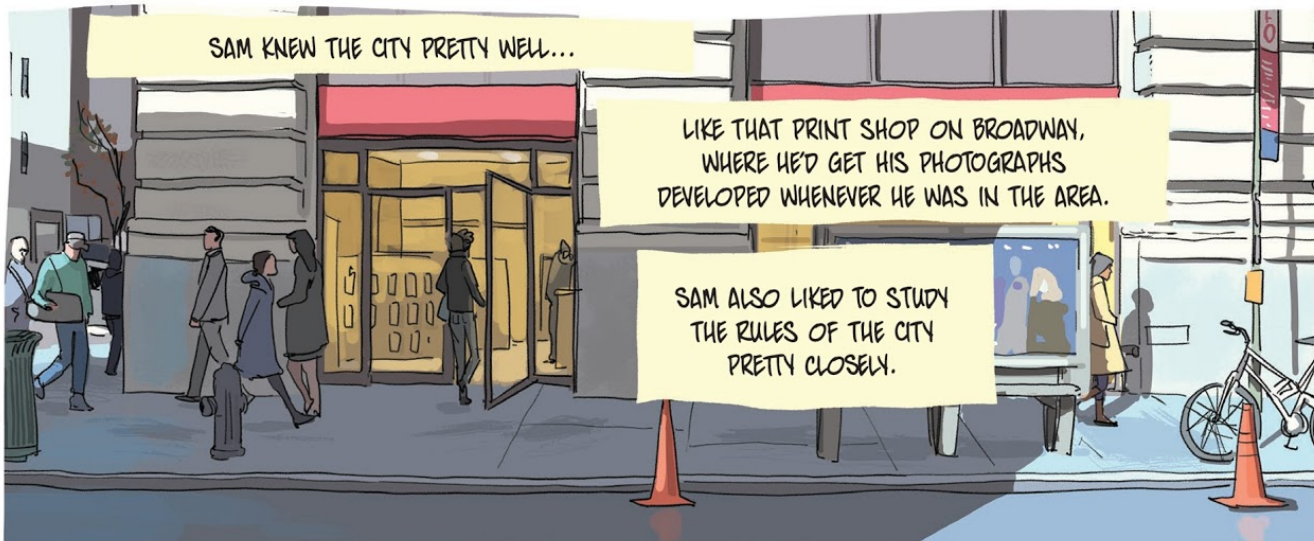
"...A CHALLENGE TO FIND LOVE, THE KIND WE OFTEN UNKNOWINGLY BRUSH AGAINST ON THE STREET, ONLY TO FORGET A MOMENT LATER, OVERWHELMED BY THE RIVER OF OUR OWN THOUGHTS, AND THE THOUGHTS OF A MILLION PASSERSBY..."

"THAT PURE LOVE THAT I HAVE OFTEN FOUND IN THE INSTANCE OF A PHOTOGRAPH..."

"IT IS A CHALLENGE TO THE CITY OF NEW YORK, THE CITY OF MY BIRTH, THE CITY THAT SHELTERED AND CARED FOR ME, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY, THROUGHOUT THE YEARS..."

"...SOMETIMES SUCCESSFULLY..."

"...SOMETIMES NOT."

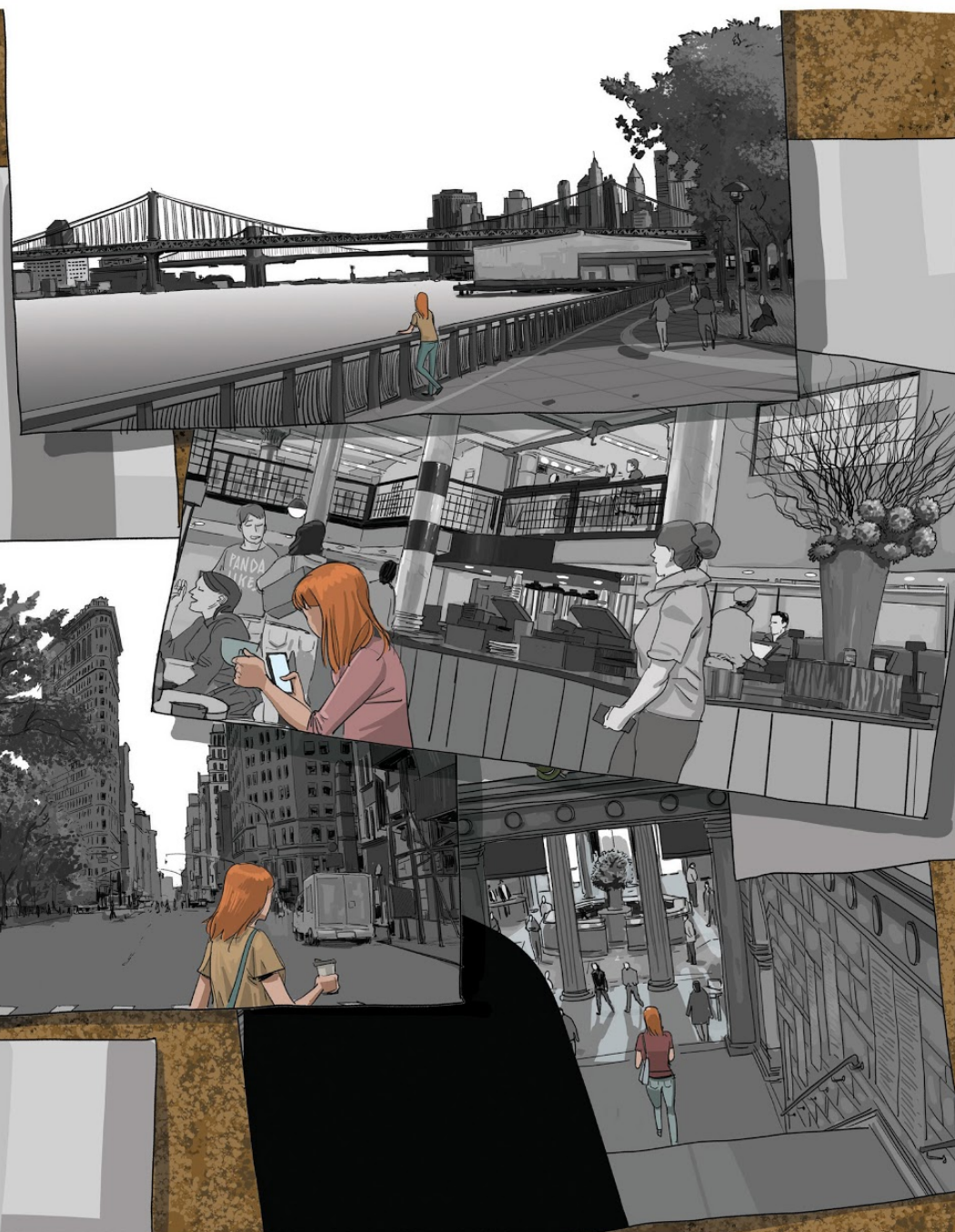




MOST OF THE TIME...



... NEW YORK...



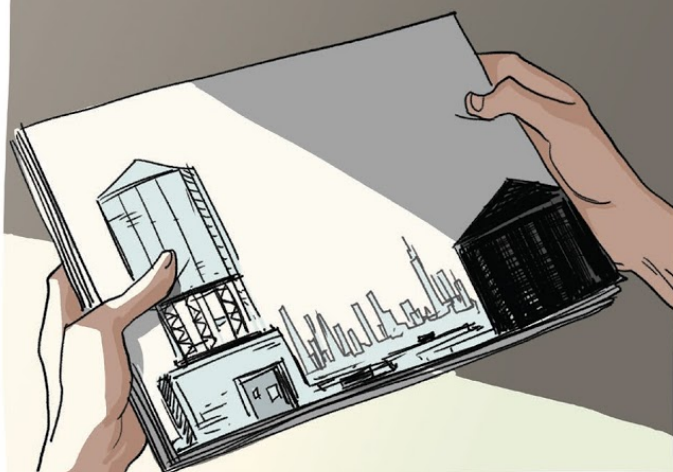
NOW, SAM HAD NO IDEA WHO THAT GIRL WAS, NOR HOW SHE ENDED UP IN DOZENS OF THE FOUR HUNDRED PHOTOS HE JUST HAD PRINTED. MAYBE THEY GAVE HIM THE WRONG PICTURES?



NO.



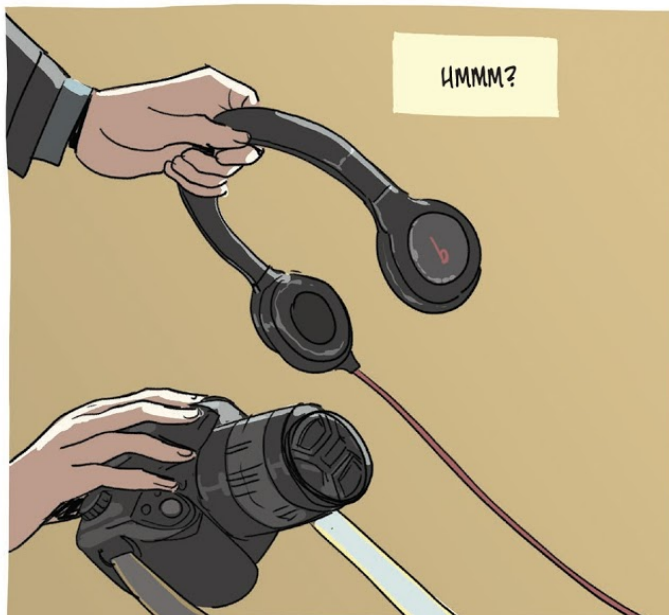
THOSE WERE DEFINITELY HIS PICTURES, TRUST ME.



SO HOW...?



HMMM?



WELL...



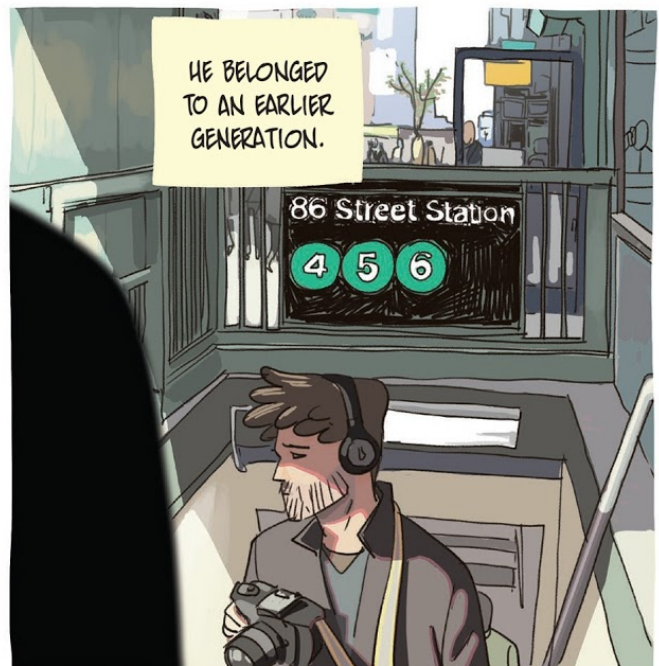


YOU'VE CERTAINLY REALIZED BY NOW THAT SAM IS AN ODD GUY, WITH HIS OBSESSIONS, HIS RULES, HIS RITUALS.

SURE.

BUT WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW IS HOW HIS ECCENTRICITIES SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE THROUGH EVERY ASPECT OF HIS LIFE.

INCLUDING HIS PROFESSIONAL LIFE.



HE WOULD IMPRINT THE MOMENT
IN HIS BRAIN.

HE KNEW WHAT HE HAD JUST SEEN, AND HE DIDN'T NEED A TINY SCREEN
TO REASSURE HIM A SECOND, A MINUTE, OR EVEN AN HOUR LATER.

HE'D PRINT THAT PHOTO IMMEDIATELY.



IN HIS MEMORY.

AND THAT...

...THAT WAS HOW HE DISTRACTED HIMSELF FROM THE PAIN
AND HIS CONSTANT SEARCH FOR DISTANCE.

THE ONLY TIME HE'D LET
HIMSELF LET GO, BECOMING ONE WITH
THE WORLD AROUND HIM.

BEFORE STARTING A PROJECT, SAM WOULD DECIDE ON A FIXED NUMBER OF PHOTOGRAPHS. AFTER REACHING THAT NUMBER, HE'D HAVE THEM PRINTED.



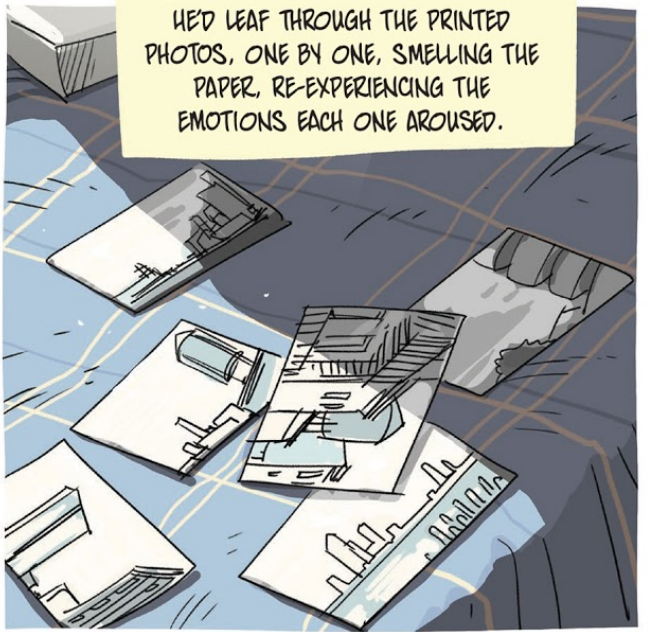
THAT WAY HE WAS ABLE TO SEE ALL THE PICTURES HE'D TAKEN, AS THEY WOULD LOOK IN PRINT.



IN SOME WAYS, IT WAS LIKE SEEING THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME.



HE'D LEAF THROUGH THE PRINTED PHOTOS, ONE BY ONE, SMELLING THE PAPER, RE-EXPERIENCING THE EMOTIONS EACH ONE AROUSED.



THEN HE'D COMPARE EACH OF THOSE PAPER MOMENTS WITH THE ONES IMPRINTED IN HIS MEMORY.



LIKE TINY ROMANCES THAT ONLY LASTED FOR AN INSTANT.



SAM NEVER FORGOT ANY OF THOSE MOMENTS.

HE REMEMBERED EVERY TINY ROMANCE.

ALL OF
THEM.

AT LEAST UNTIL THAT DAY.



SO WHERE HAD ALL THOSE
FORGOTTEN MOMENTS GONE?



DO YOU THINK YOU KNOW WHERE
THIS IS GOING YET? NO?!



WELL, NEITHER DID HE,
NOT YET, AT LEAST.

WHERE WAS HE LOOKING,
AS HE TOOK THOSE PHOTOS?



DOZENS OF MOMENTS, DOZENS OF
ROMANCES THAT HE SIMPLY COULDN'T
REMEMBER. WHY? WHERE HAD THEY GONE?

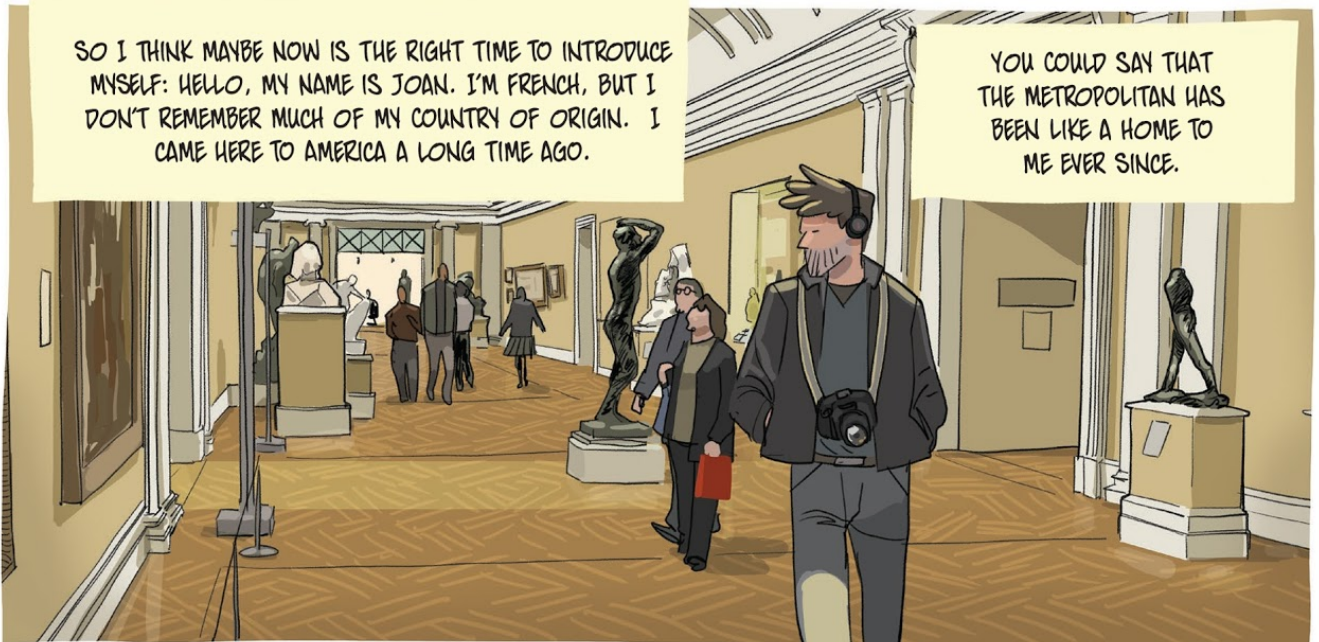




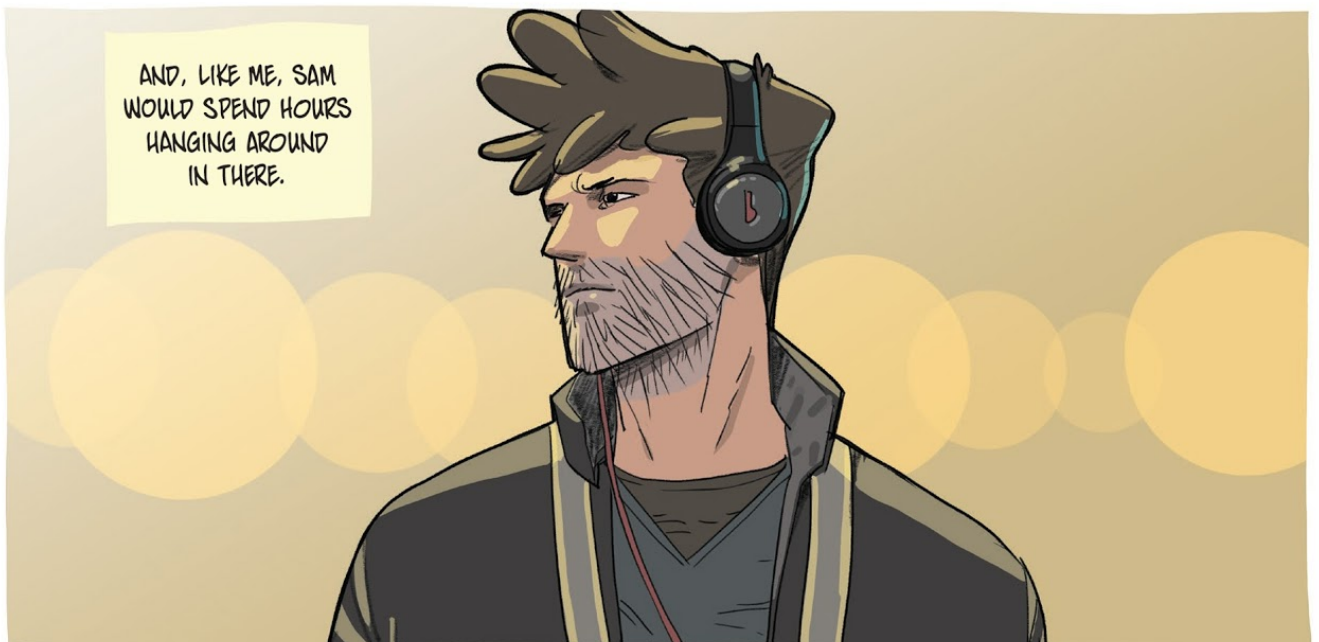
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM WAS SAM'S FAVORITE REFUGE. WHENEVER SOMETHING WENT WRONG, OR HE FELT THE NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE, THAT WAS WHERE HE'D RUN.

SO I THINK MAYBE NOW IS THE RIGHT TIME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF: HELLO, MY NAME IS JOAN. I'M FRENCH, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER MUCH OF MY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN. I CAME HERE TO AMERICA A LONG TIME AGO.

YOU COULD SAY THAT THE METROPOLITAN HAS BEEN LIKE A HOME TO ME EVER SINCE.



AND, LIKE ME, SAM WOULD SPEND HOURS HANGING AROUND IN THERE.



LESS THAN ME, PERHAPS.
BUT IT'S AS THOUGH HE FOUND
ALL THE COMPANY HE
NEEDED IN THERE.



ALL THE WORDS
HE DIDN'T SPEAK,
ALL THE WORDS HE
DIDN'T HEAR.

BUT I REALIZED, I
DON'T KNOW HOW,
THAT I COULD HEAR
THEM ALL.



SAM COULD TELL
ME ANYTHING.

HE COULD ASK
ME ANYTHING.



"WHAT WAS I LOOKING AT WHEN I TOOK THOSE PHOTOS, JOAN?"

"WHY DO I HAVE NO MEMORY OF THOSE MOMENTS?"

"WHAT DOES THIS CITY WANT FROM ME?"

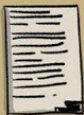


(PLEASE DON'T LAUGH, I CAN'T
DO HIS VOICE VERY WELL..)

BUT THOSE WERE HIS QUESTIONS,
AND I COULD HEAR THEM CLEARLY.

AND I THINK THAT, DEEP DOWN,
SAM KNEW I COULD HEAR HIM...

BUT THAT WASN'T THE RIGHT
DAY FOR ME TO ANSWER HIM.



I MEAN, I
COULDN'T.

Jules Bastien-Lepage
French, Damvillers 1848-1884 Paris
JOAN of Arc 1879

Joan of Arc, the medieval teenaged martyr from the province of Lorraine, gained new status as a patriotic symbol after France ceded the territory to Germany following the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). Bastien-Lepage, a native of Lorraine, depicts the moment when Saints Michael, Margaret, and Catherine appear to Joan in her parents' garden, rousing her to fight against the English invaders in the Hundred Years War. When the painting was exhibited in the Salon of 1880, critics praised the expressiveness of the principal figure, but found the saints' presence at odds with Bastien-Lepage's naturalistic style.

Gift of Erwin Davis, 1889
89.21.1

6014

I DIDN'T
KNOW HOW.

SO, ON THAT PARTICULAR
DAY, I CONTINUED TO
LOOK SOMEWHERE ELSE,
AS THOUGH NOTHING
STRANGE WAS HAPPENING.

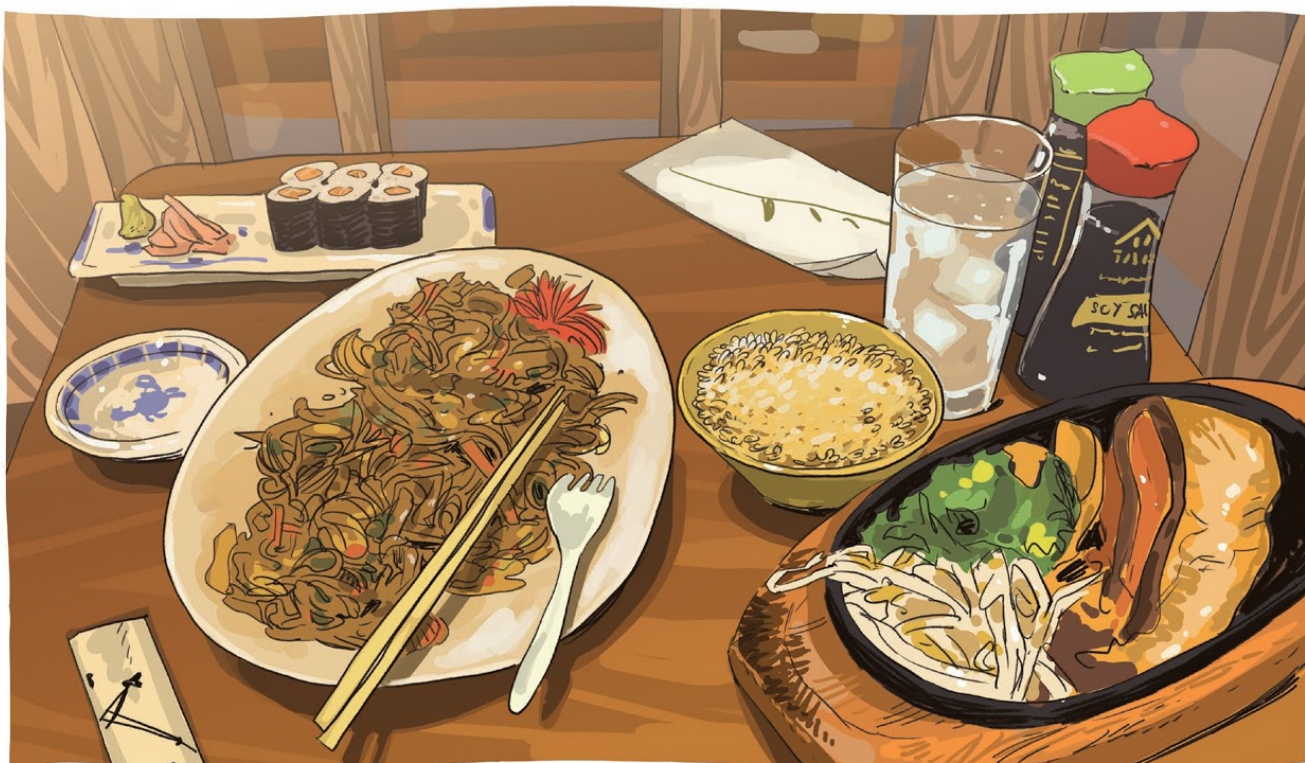


JUST AS HE
WAS DOING.





NUMBERS AND RULES



WE WERE TALKING ABOUT
RULES AT THE START OF THIS STORY.
NUMBERS AND RULES.

IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT
SAM'S ENTIRE LIFE REVOLVED
AROUND THESE TWO CONCEPTS.
LITERALLY.



LET'S TAKE MANKIND'S TWO ESSENTIAL
NEEDS: SLEEPING AND EATING.

IF YOU KNOW HOW TO WORK
AROUND THE RULES OF A CITY,
SATISFYING THESE TWO NEEDS
ISN'T THAT DIFFICULT.

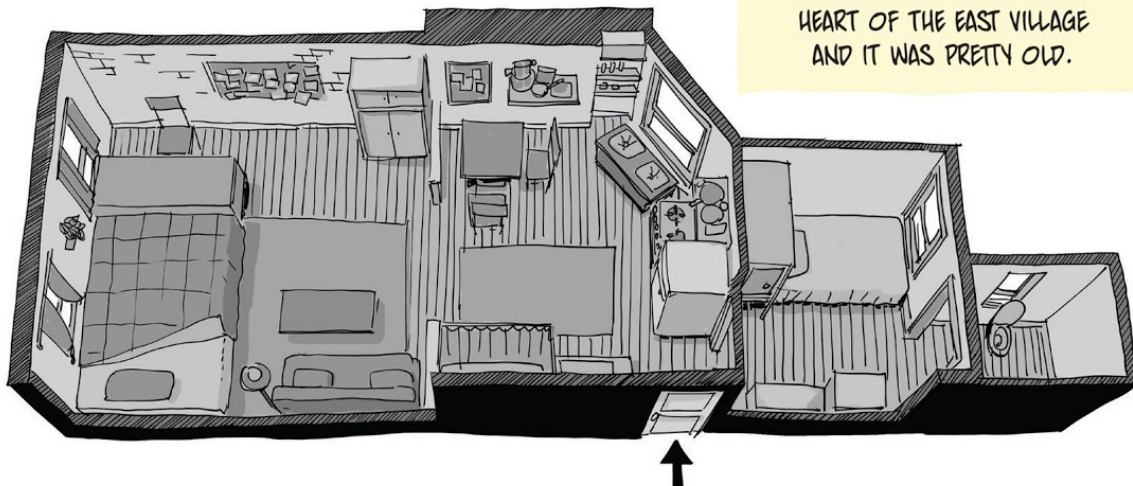


EDNA, SAM'S LANDLADY, WAS
AN OLD FRIEND OF HIS FATHER'S. A
BIT OF AN ECCENTRIC, BUT PRETTY CHILL
AND LAID BACK. SHE'D ALWAYS LEND ONE OF
HER FLATS TO SAM BECAUSE OF THAT
FAMILY FRIENDSHIP.

SHE NEVER ASKED SAM FOR
ANYTHING AND, IN RETURN, HE'D
SLIP THE RENT CHECK UNDER THE
FRONT DOOR ON THE FIRST OF EVERY
MONTH, SOMETIMES SOONER.



THE APARTMENT WAS IN THE HEART OF THE EAST VILLAGE AND IT WAS PRETTY OLD.



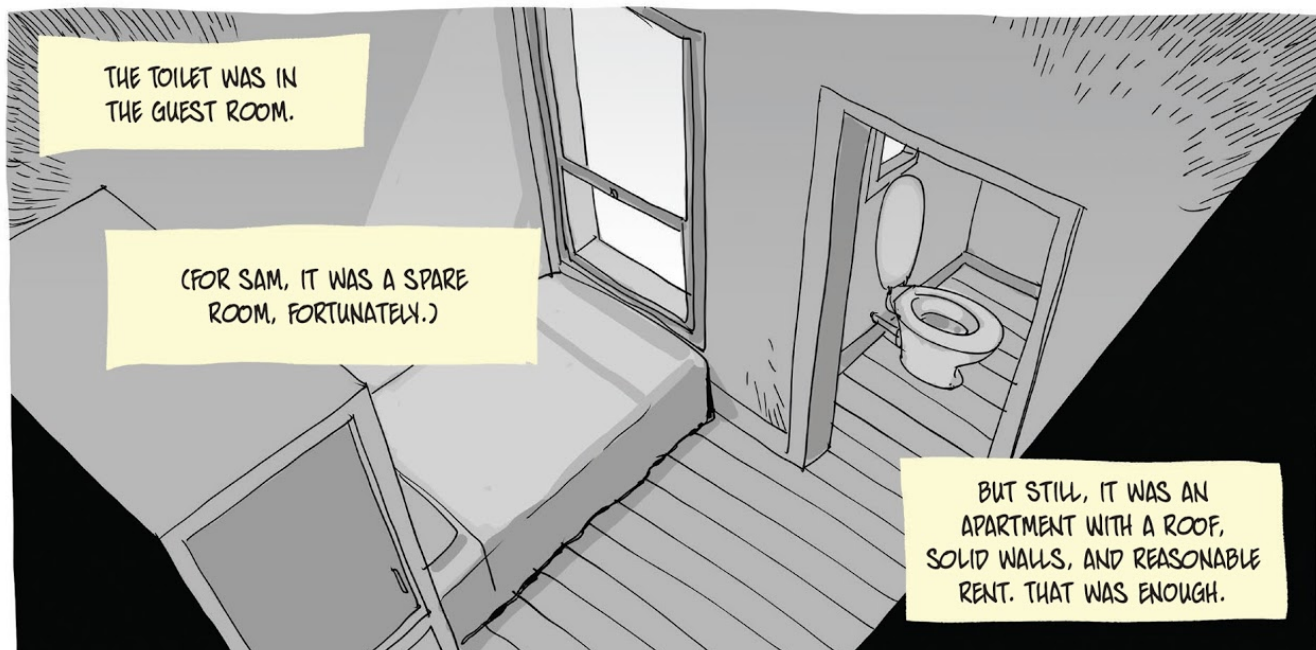
WHEN I SAY PRETTY OLD, I MEAN THE BATHTUB WAS IN THE KITCHEN.



(WHICH ACTUALLY CAME IN PRETTY HANDY WHEN TRYING TO SAVE BOTH WATER AND SOAP -- YOU'VE GOT THE THE CONVENIENT SITUATION OF WASHING THE DISHES WHILE TAKING A SHOWER!)

THE TOILET WAS IN THE GUEST ROOM.

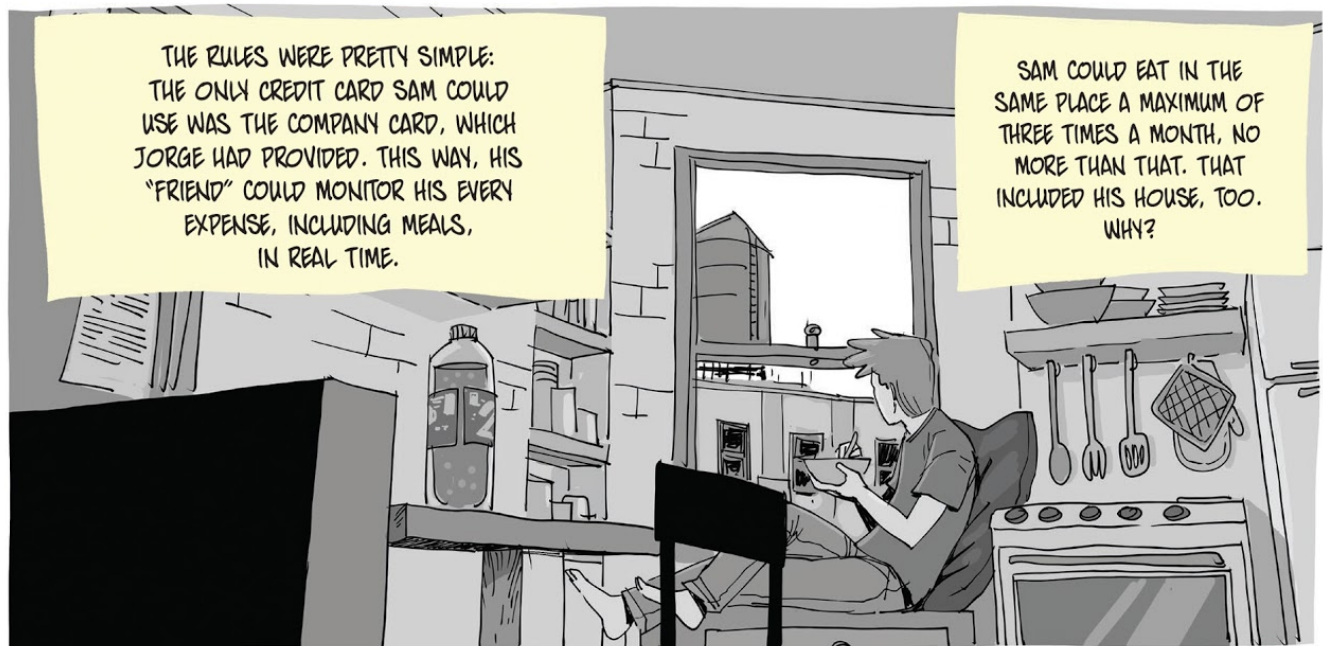
(FOR SAM, IT WAS A SPARE ROOM, FORTUNATELY.)



BUT STILL, IT WAS AN APARTMENT WITH A ROOF, SOLID WALLS, AND REASONABLE RENT. THAT WAS ENOUGH.



AS FOR GETTING FOOD, WELL, WITHOUT ANY HUMAN INTERACTION, THAT COULD HAVE PROVED A MAJOR BARRIER. BUT THERE WERE STILL THOSE TWO KEY FACTORS IN PLAY: RULES AND NUMBERS.



THE RULES WERE PRETTY SIMPLE: THE ONLY CREDIT CARD SAM COULD USE WAS THE COMPANY CARD, WHICH JORGE HAD PROVIDED. THIS WAY, HIS "FRIEND" COULD MONITOR HIS EVERY EXPENSE, INCLUDING MEALS, IN REAL TIME.

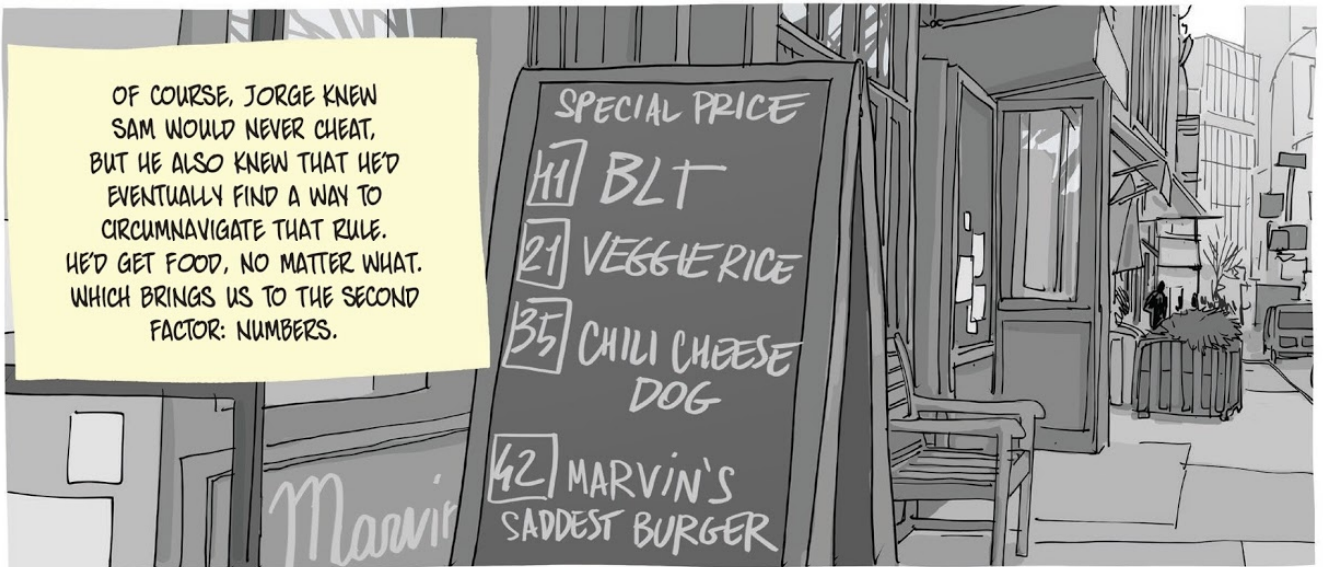
SAM COULD EAT IN THE SAME PLACE A MAXIMUM OF THREE TIMES A MONTH, NO MORE THAN THAT. THAT INCLUDED HIS HOUSE, TOO. WHY?



WELL, BECAUSE GETTING FOOD WAS THE ONLY TIME WHEN THIS CHALLENGE COULD REALLY CAUSE SAM SOME HEADACHES...

AND JORGE WANTED TO SAVOR EVERY MOMENT OF THIS CHALLENGE FOR THE GOOD OF THE ARTICLE.

OF COURSE, JORGE KNEW SAM WOULD NEVER CHEAT, BUT HE ALSO KNEW THAT HE'D EVENTUALLY FIND A WAY TO CIRCUMNAVIGATE THAT RULE. HE'D GET FOOD, NO MATTER WHAT. WHICH BRINGS US TO THE SECOND FACTOR: NUMBERS.



SAM SPENT A LOT OF TIME GOING THROUGH THE MENUS OF EVERY RESTAURANT IN AND AROUND HIS NEIGHBORHOOD THAT PUT A NUMBER NEXT TO EACH ITEM. THEN, HE MADE A DETAILED LIST OF THE PLACES HE'D VISIT.



AFTER WORKING OUT A PLAN, ALL HE'D NEED TO DO WAS WRITE THE NUMBERS FOR WHATEVER FOOD OR DRINK HE WANTED FROM HIS VENUE OF CHOICE ON A PIECE OF PAPER

HANDING OVER THAT PIECE OF PAPER WOULD BE THE ONLY INTERACTION HE'D HAVE WITH WAITERS OR RESTAURANT STAFF. SIMPLE AS THAT.



BUT ON THAT THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 15TH, SAM FORGOT
TO EAT, SINCE HE'D BEEN AT
THE MUSEUM ALL DAY.

GEORGE:
I don't see any
charge for lunch...
did you forget to
eat?! Is everything
okay? Did you get
the photos? Let
me know you're
okay!

SO, AFTER EATING NUMBERS 4, 11, AND 22
AT A JAPANESE RESTAURANT NEAR HOME,
HE DECIDED TO TAKE A NAP, EXHAUSTED BY
HIS OWN THOUGHTS.



"WHY IS THERE ONE LADY IN COLOR IN A DOZEN
OF MY BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS??"

PROBABLY THE ODDEST
QUESTION HE EVER ASKED HIMSELF.

WELL, HE'D FIGURE IT OUT EVENTUALLY.
IT WAS A CHALLENGE, AFTER ALL.

AND NORMALLY, THE FIRST THING TO
DO WHEN FACED WITH A QUESTION...



...IS LOOK FOR
AN ANSWER.

NOVEMBER 16TH

NOVEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

(...) I LOVE JAZZ. IN SUMMER, THEY'LL OFTEN ORGANIZE
JAZZ CONCERTS IN THE CENTER OF MADISON SQUARE PARK.

I NEVER WENT TO ANY OF THEM.

FRANKLY, ALL I LISTEN TO IS CHET BAKER.



AND TO BE HONEST, I ONLY KNOW ONE OF HIS SONGS.

IN FACT, IT'S THE ONLY JAZZ SONG I KNOW.

NOVEMBER 20TH

NOVEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

(...) OF ALL THE MANY PLACES THE CITY OFFERED,
I WENT BACK TO CENTRAL PARK THE MOST.

ANYONE WHO SAYS THERE'S ONLY ONE CENTRAL PARK IS WRONG.

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF CENTRAL PARKS.

ONE FOR EVERY SEASON, CLIMATE, OR WEATHER.

AND ONE FOR EVERY SECOND, MINUTE, AND HOUR OF THE DAY.



ONE FOR EVERY FALLING LEAF.

AND ONE FOR EVERY SINGLE RAY OF SUNSHINE THAT
FILTERS THROUGH THE TREE BRANCHES.

THERE'S A CENTRAL PARK FOR EVERY SNOWFLAKE THAT FALLS.

AND ONE FOR EVERY HORSE APPLE STUCK TO THE WHEELS OF A CARRIAGE.

WHOEVER SAYS THERE'S ONLY ONE CENTRAL PARK IS WRONG.

HONESTLY, I'VE NEVER SEEN THE SAME CENTRAL PARK TWICE IN MY LIFE (...)

NOVEMBER 24TH

NOVEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

(...) THERE WAS A CAFE ON 15TH THAT I'D GO TO OFTEN.

THE DECAF WASN'T ALL THAT GOOD.

AND THE MUFFINS WERE SORT OF DRY.

I DON'T REALLY RECALL MUCH ABOUT THE STAFF
OR OTHER CUSTOMERS.



SO WHY GO BACK THERE?

I THINK IT WAS BECAUSE THERE WAS AN ALLEY ACROSS THE STREET.
A NARROW ALLEY, BETWEEN TWO BUILDINGS.

AN ALLEY WHERE THE SETTING WINTER SUN
WOULD CUT THROUGH THE PLACE WITH AN INTENSITY
BEFORE LANDING ON MY BACK

I'M PRETTY SURE THAT WAS THE ONLY REASON.

THE WARMTH OF A NARROW
SUN ON MY BACK.

THE BOX

(...) NOTHING. THIS CITY JUST COULDN'T GIVE ME AN ANSWER. OR MAYBE I COULDN'T HEAR IT, BUT IT'S TRUE THAT SHE HAS HER OWN LANGUAGE, AND LIVING HERE, WELL, IT'S DIFFERENT... VERY DIFFERENT...

DIFFERENT FROM WHAT?

WELL, A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIVING THAN IN ANY OTHER CITY IN THE WORLD, AT LEAST FOR ME.



I NEVER BELIEVED IN DESTINY, YET EVERY SECOND SPENT IN THAT CITY GAVE ME THE IMPRESSION THAT EVERYTHING HAPPENS EXACTLY WHERE IT DOES BECAUSE THAT'S HOW IT'S MEANT TO BE.

A SMALL PART OF THAT IMPRESSION
CAME FROM MY CULTURAL BACKGROUND,
BASED ON BOOKS AND MOVIES FULL OF
CHARACTERS AND STORIES SET THERE.

BUT THE PEOPLE FORMED THE BULK OF THAT FEELING.

THE CROWD OF STRANGERS I'D COME
ACROSS ON THE STREETS EVERY DAY.

A diverse crowd of people walking on a city street. From left to right, there is a police officer in uniform, a man in a suit and tie, a man in a long coat, a woman in a black top, a man in a dark jacket and headphones, a man in a grey sweater holding a newspaper, a man in a flight suit, a man with a beard and glasses talking on a mobile phone, and a woman in a black dress. The background shows a city street with trees and buildings.

HUNDREDS OF HUMAN RUBBER BANDS,
LAUNCHED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS,
EACH WITH THEIR OWN THOUGHTS
AND DESTINATIONS.



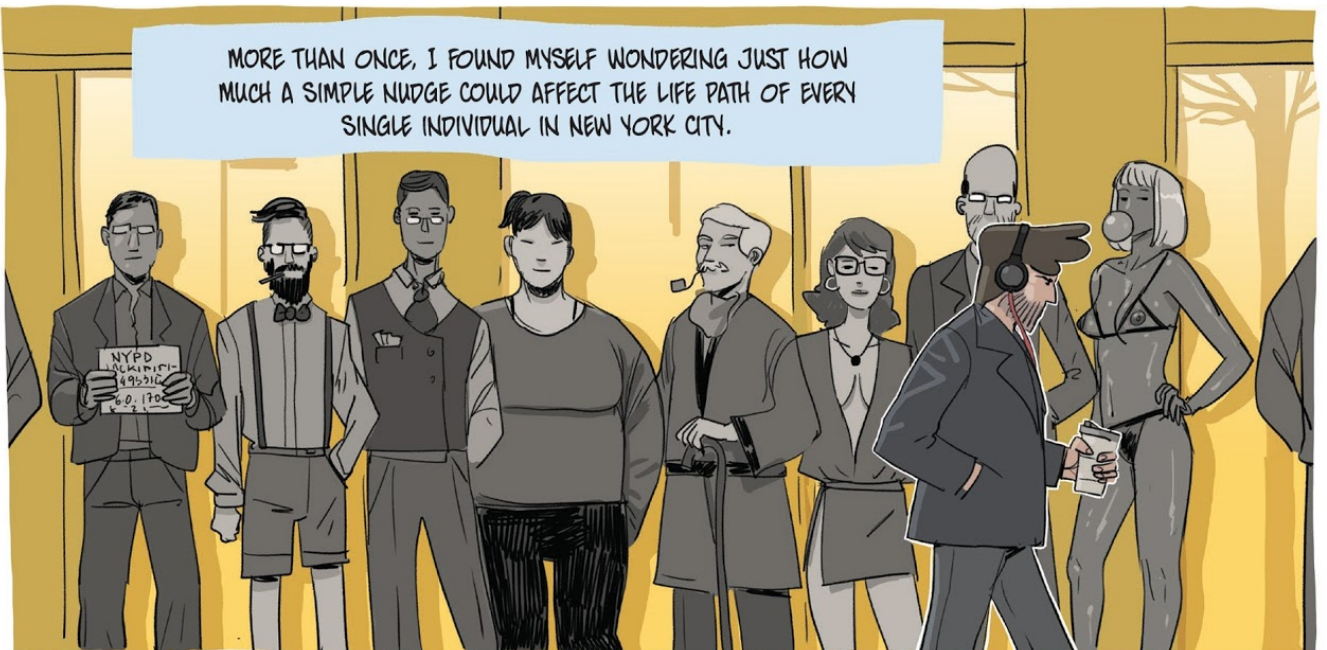
THEIR OWN DREAMS.



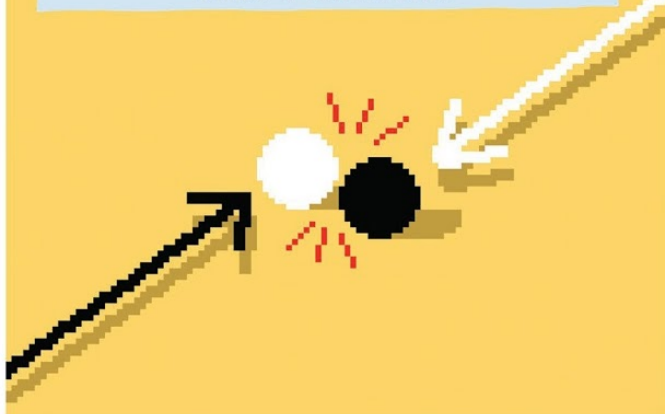
TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ELBOWS BUMPING AGAINST
EACH OTHER WITHOUT SAYING SORRY, JUST MOVING ON.



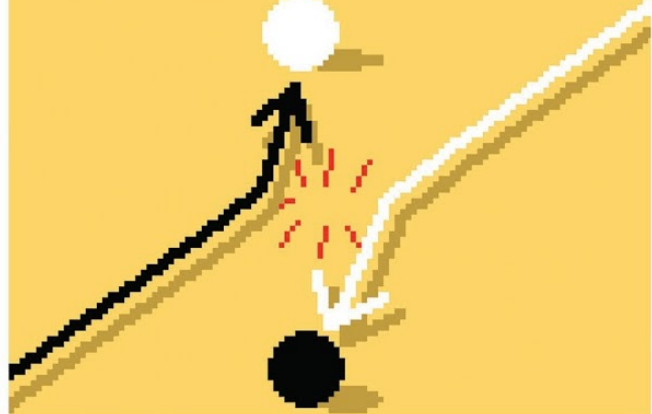
MORE THAN ONCE, I FOUND MYSELF WONDERING JUST HOW
MUCH A SIMPLE NUDGE COULD AFFECT THE LIFE PATH OF EVERY
SINGLE INDIVIDUAL IN NEW YORK CITY.



LOOK AT IT LIKE THIS:
TAKE TWO MARBLES TRAVELING AT
GREAT SPEED. THEY END UP HITTING EACH
OTHER, IF ONLY LIGHTLY.



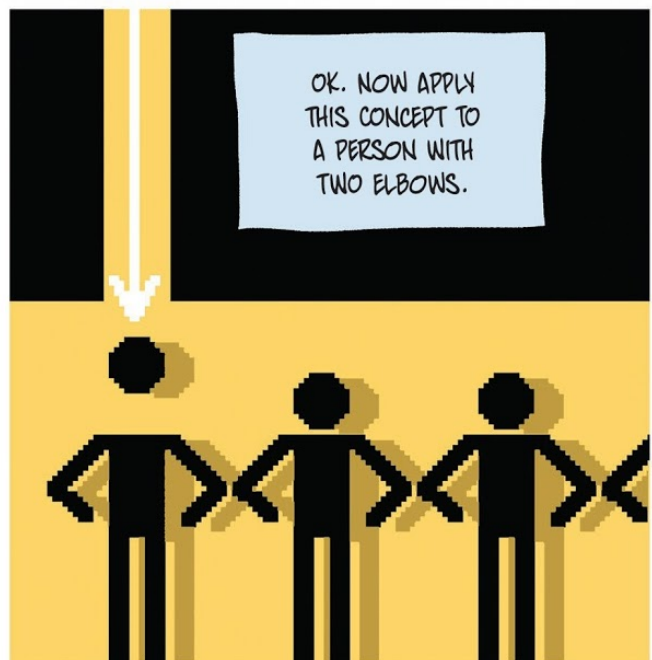
IT IS PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE
FOR THEIR INITIAL TRAJECTORY TO
NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE COLLISION.



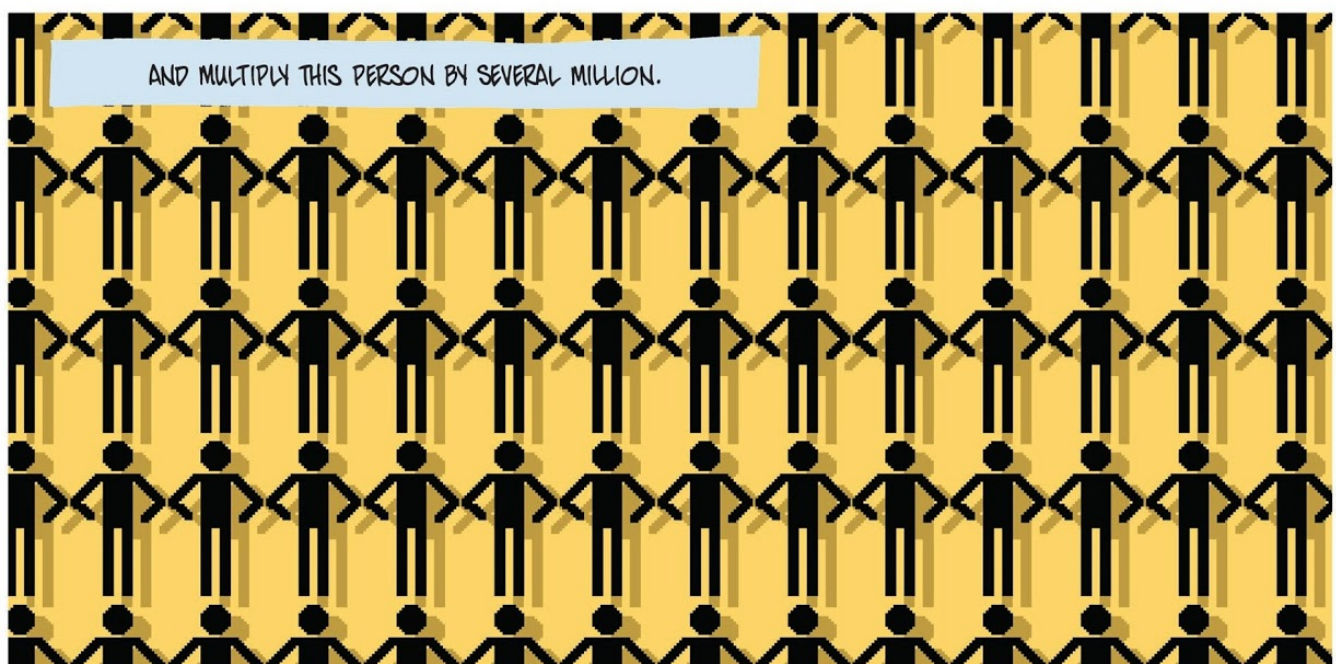
THE TWO MARBLES WILL THEREFORE NEVER
REACH THE SAME POINT THEY WERE DESTINED TO
REACH BEFORE THE COLLISION. IT'S SIMPLE PHYSICS.



OK. NOW APPLY
THIS CONCEPT TO
A PERSON WITH
TWO ELBOWS.

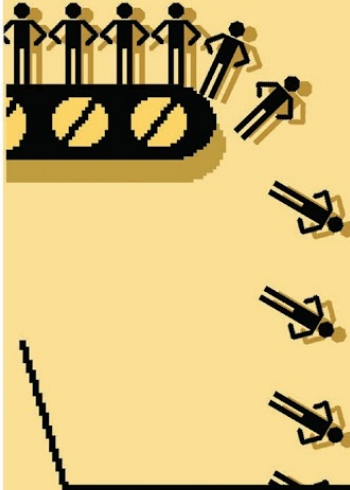


AND MULTIPLY THIS PERSON BY SEVERAL MILLION.

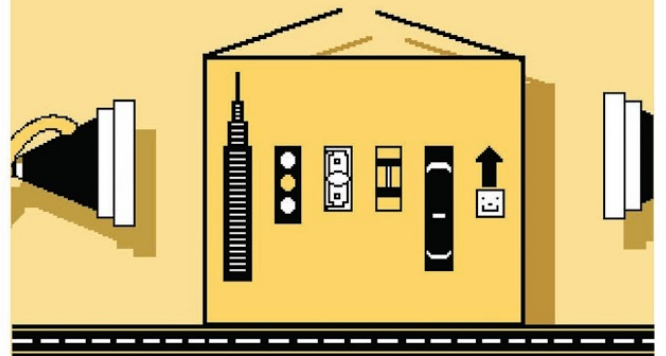


TAKE THESE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE
AND STICK THEM IN A BOX FULL OF
SKYSCRAPERS, LIGHTS, MONEY, TAXIS,
LIMOUSINES, HOPES, AND DREAMS...

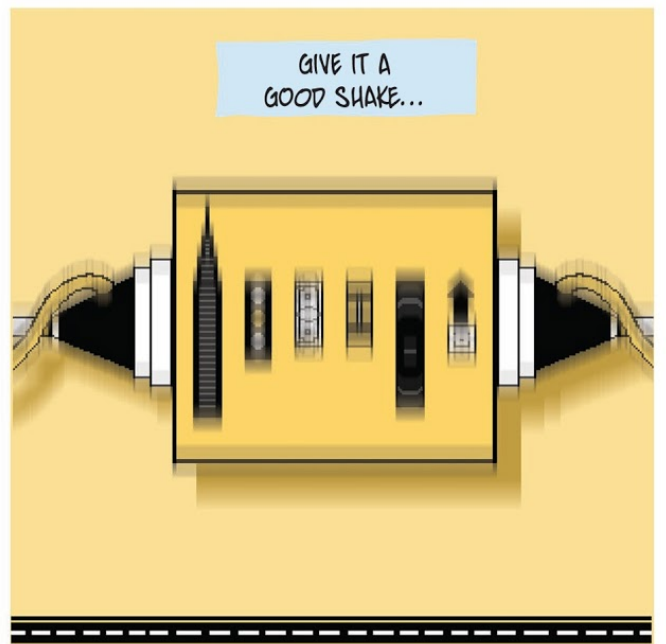
...AND VERY
NARROW
SIDEWALKS.



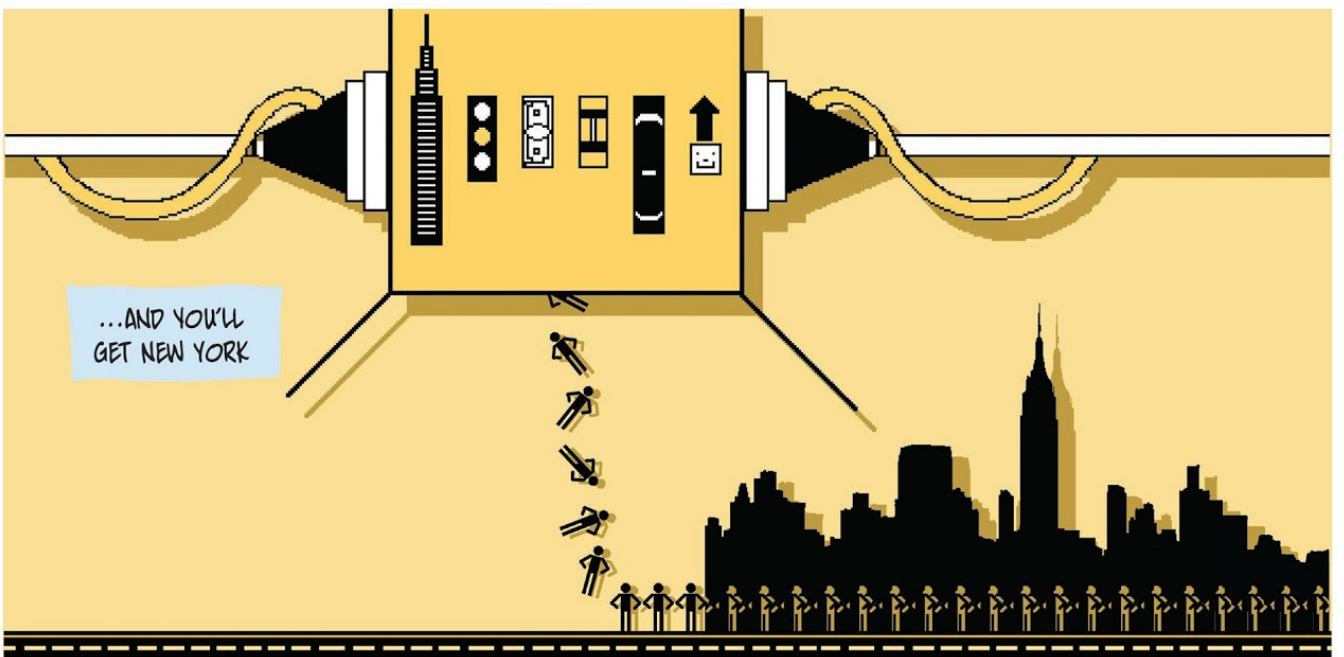
CLOSE IT.



GIVE IT A
GOOD SHAKE...




...AND YOU'LL
GET NEW YORK





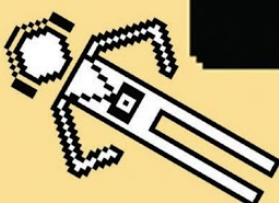
NOW, MY ELBOWS WERE
STICKING OUT JUST AS MUCH
AS ANYONE ELSE'S IN THE CITY.



WHICH IS WHY MY SEARCH FOR
SOLITUDE HAD GIVEN WAY TO ANOTHER,
MORE CHALLENGING ONE: THE SEARCH FOR
THE MOMENT WHEN I FIRST GOT NUGGED.



THE EXACT INSTANT WHEN
MY TRAJECTORY CHANGED.



THERE WAS SOMETHING I
COULDN'T SEE, A MISSING BLOCK
IN MY MEMORY THAT TURNED ALL THE
OTHER MEMORIES INVISIBLE...



...INCLUDING THOSE PHOTOS
I DIDN'T REMEMBER TAKING.

THE PHOTOS WHERE
SHE APPEARED.

THE SMARTEST THING TO DO WOULD HAVE BEEN
TO GO BACK TO THAT PRINT SHOP AND ASK FOR
AN EXPLANATION AS TO WHY THERE WERE PICTURES
THAT DEVELOPED DIFFERENTLY FROM ALL THE OTHERS

BUT I COULDN'T DO THAT.
I WASN'T GOING TO CHEAT. A CHALLENGE
IS A CHALLENGE AND RULES ARE EVERYTHING.

BESIDES, I'D BEEN PRINTING ALL
OF MY PHOTOS THERE EVER SINCE
I FIRST CAME TO NEW YORK.

AND THIS WAS THE FIRST
TIME THIS HAS HAPPENED.

NO. THE KEY WAS
SOMEWHERE ELSE, AND
I WASN'T LOOKING
CAREFULLY ENOUGH.

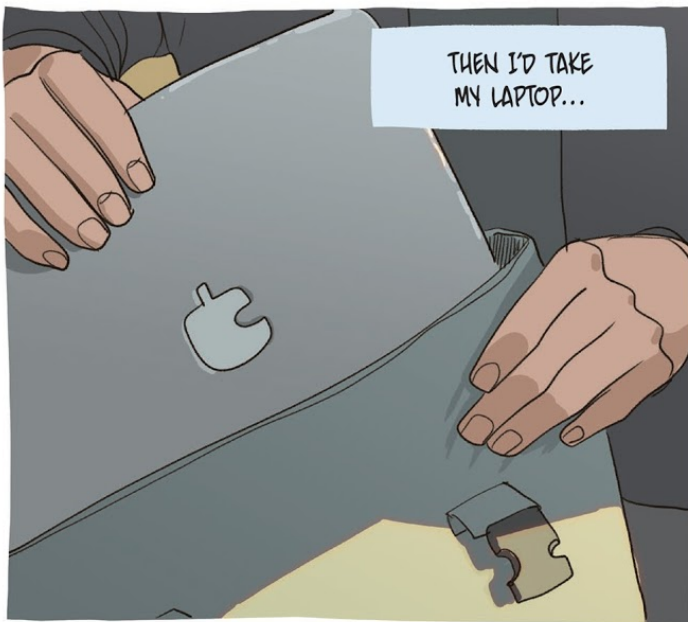
SOMETHING PREVENTED ME FROM REMEMBERING.
SOMETHING STOPPED ME FROM FALLING IN LOVE
WITH THE MOMENT WHEN I TOOK THE PHOTO.
I JUST HAD TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IT WAS.



SO, EVERY DAY, FROM THAT MOMENT
FORWARD, I STARTED FOLLOWING THE
EXACT SAME SCRIPT (...)



I'D SPEND THE ENTIRE MORNING LOOKING AT THOSE PICTURES, THE PLACES, THE LIGHT, EVERYTHING.



THEN I'D TAKE MY LAPTOP...



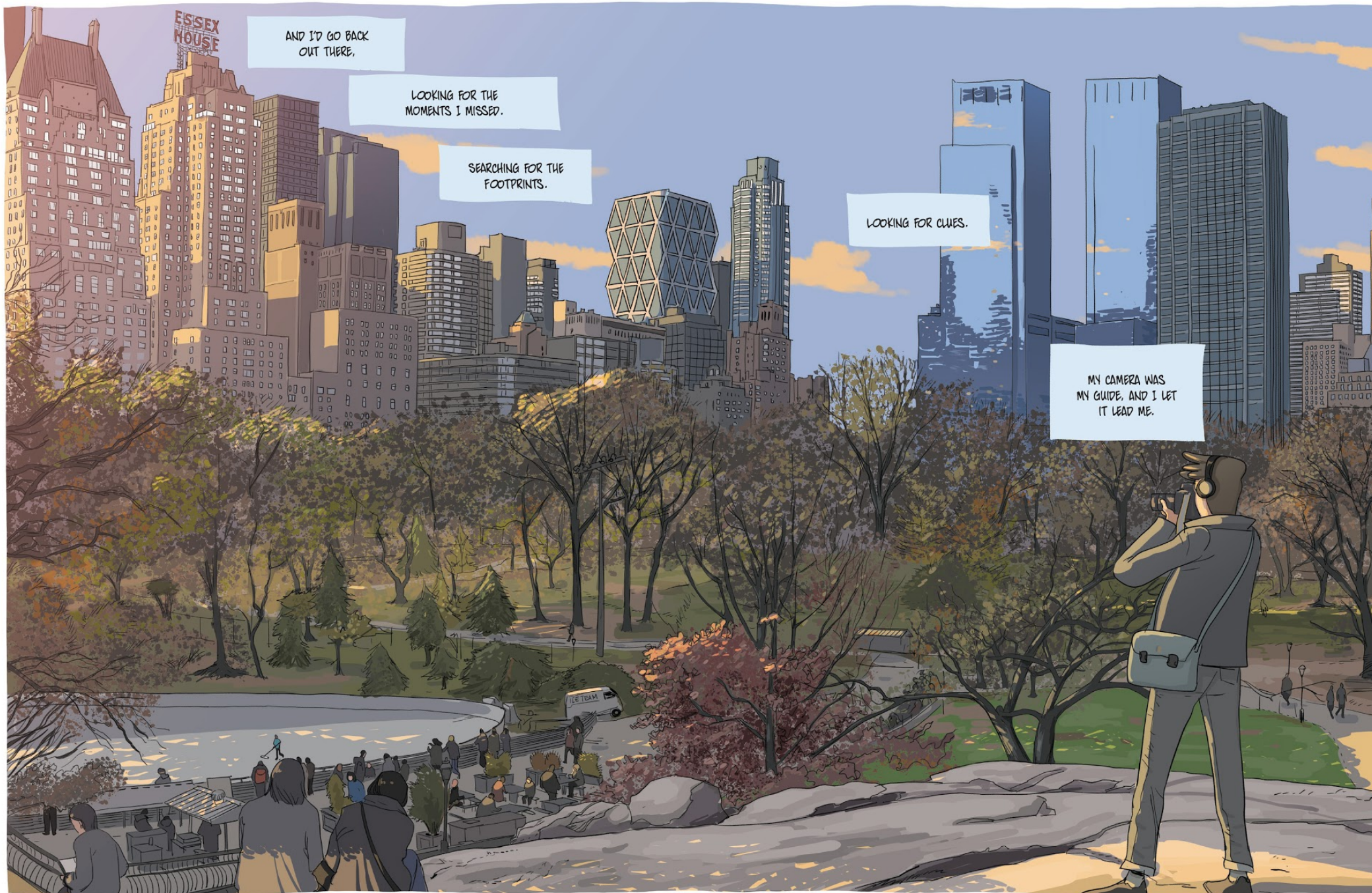
...MY NEATLY FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER...



...MY CAMERA (MY ONE AND ONLY TRUE LOVE)...



...AND MY HEADPHONES, MY FAVORITE ANTISOCIAL ARMOR.



AND I'D GO BACK
OUT THERE,

LOOKING FOR THE
MOMENTS I MISSED.

SEARCHING FOR THE
FOOTPRINTS.

LOOKING FOR CLUES.

MY CAMERA WAS
MY GUIDE, AND I LET
IT LEAD ME.



AND THERE IT WAS,
JUST AS I IMAGINED IT.



EVERYTHING WENT WELL, FOR A WHILE AT LEAST,
UNTIL ONE AFTERNOON...

THE AFTERNOON OF FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH.



...TOOK THE UMPTEENTH SHOT...



...CLOSED MY EYES FOR THE
UMPTEENTH TIME...



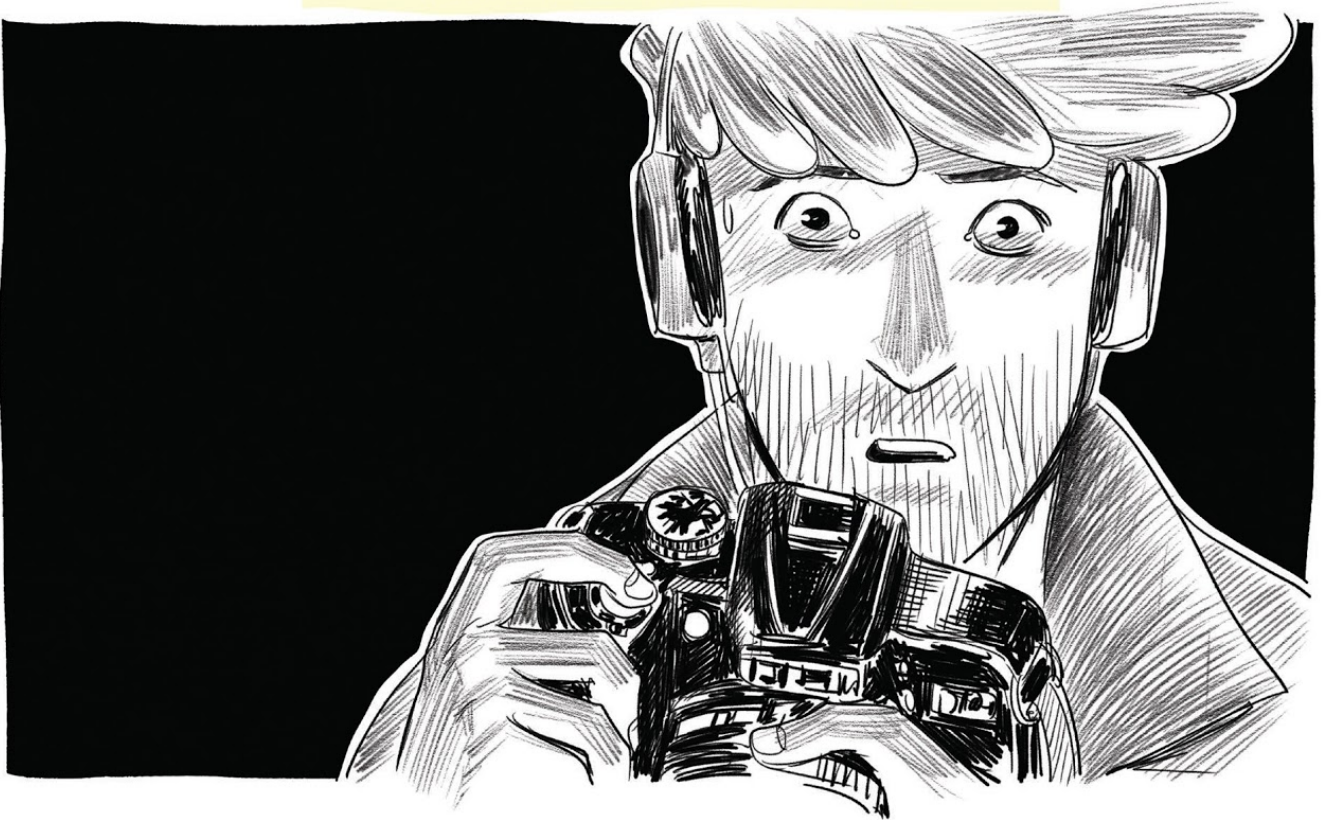
...AND DISCOVERED THAT, IN MY MIND...

...THERE WAS NO
PICTURE (...)

NOVEMBER 30TH

NOVEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

HIS FIRST REACTION WAS TO PANIC, OF COURSE.



SO HE COPY-PASTED EACH
STEP METICULOUSLY.

HE TOOK THE SAME
PHOTOGRAPH AGAIN.



CLOSED HIS EYES AGAIN.



AND AGAIN, NOTHING.
JUST PITCH BLACK.

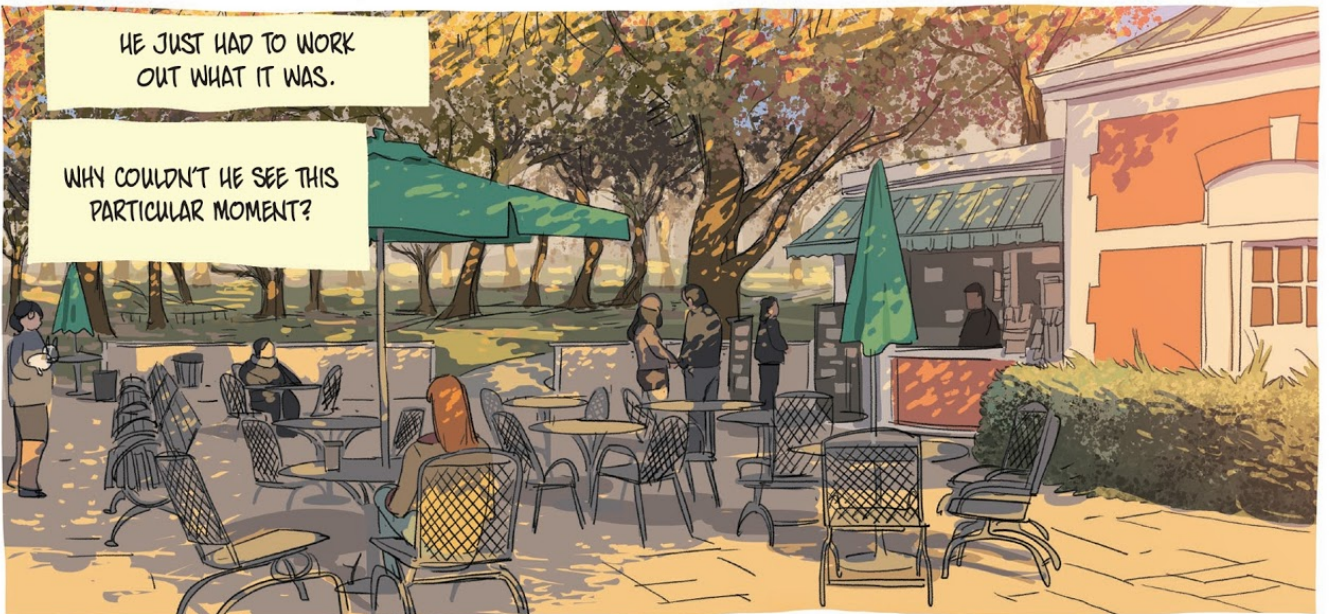
THAT FRIDAY, SAM REALIZED
HE'D FOUND HIS MARBLE, HIS
NUDGE, HIS BLIND SPOT.

HE KNEW HE WAS
REACHING A TURNING POINT.



HE JUST HAD TO WORK
OUT WHAT IT WAS.

WHY COULDN'T HE SEE THIS
PARTICULAR MOMENT?



WAS THERE SOMETHING
BIGGER IN FRONT OF HIM,
BLOCKING HIS VIEW?





NO, NOT THE CUP.

THE PERSON HOLDING IT.

HER...



SHE WAS THE REASON FOR HIS BLACKOUT.

THERE, IN FRONT OF HIM.



"WHO ARE
YOU?"

"WHY DID YOU STEAL MY MEMORIES?"

"THOSE WERE MY MEMORIES,
WHY DID YOU STEAL THEM?!"

THERE WERE A HUNDRED QUESTIONS IN SAM'S HEAD, BUT HE COULDN'T ASK ANY OF THEM.

HE WASN'T ALLOWED TO TALK TO HER, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS THE ONE THING HE WANTED TO DO MOST RIGHT NOW.



HE COULDN'T DO IT, HE COULDN'T BREAK THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE OF THE CHALLENGE. HE'D NEVER FORGIVE HIMSELF.

SO, THAT DAY, HE DECIDED TO BREAK A SMALLER ONE.

HE DECIDED TO LOOK AT THE PHOTO HE
HAD JUST TAKEN ON HIS CAMERA SCREEN.

HE WOULD LOOK AT IT QUICKLY,
HOPING TO SPOT SOMETHING,
A DETAIL, ANYTHING THAT
COULD HELP HIM UNDERSTAND.



BUT IT WAS FOR THAT VERY REASON
NEW YORK DECIDED TO PUNISH HIM AGAIN.

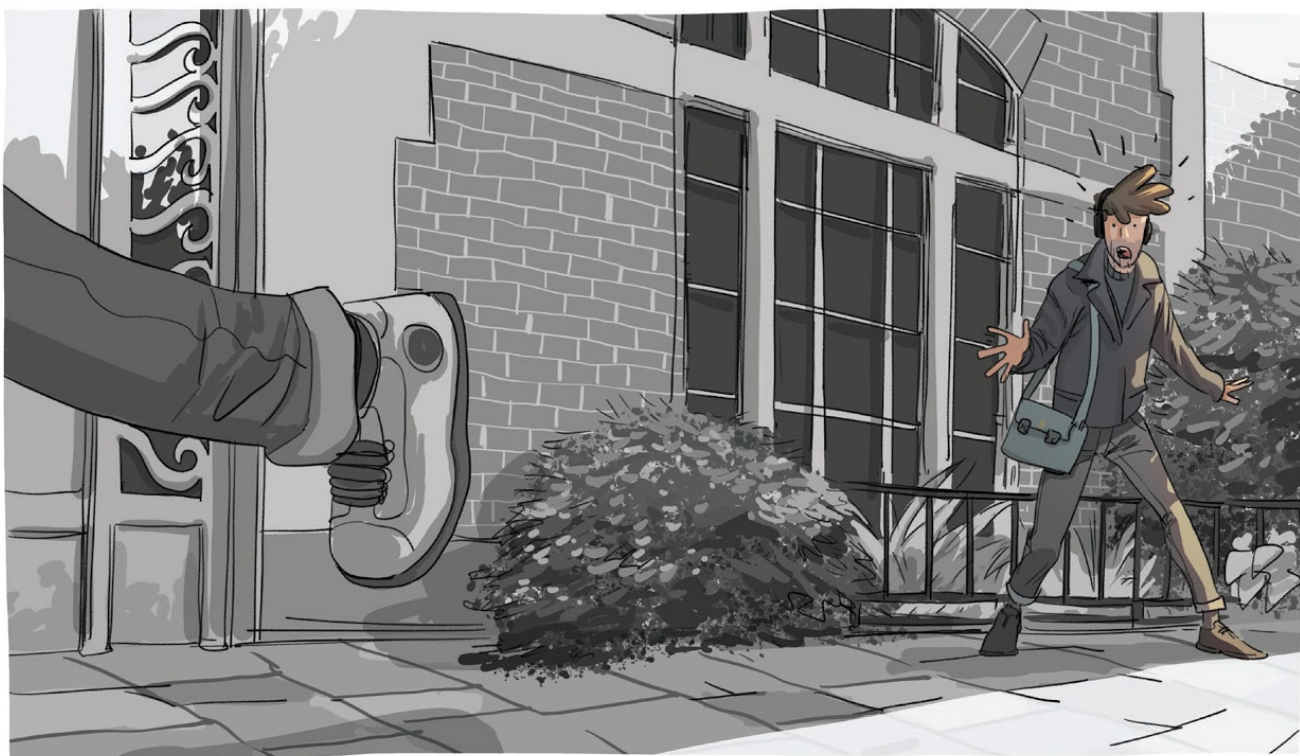
A LOT MORE
HARSHLY THIS TIME.



BECAUSE WORKING AROUND
THE RULES OF A CHALLENGE
IS ONE THING...



...BUT BREAKING THEM IS
ANOTHER MATTER ENTIRELY.

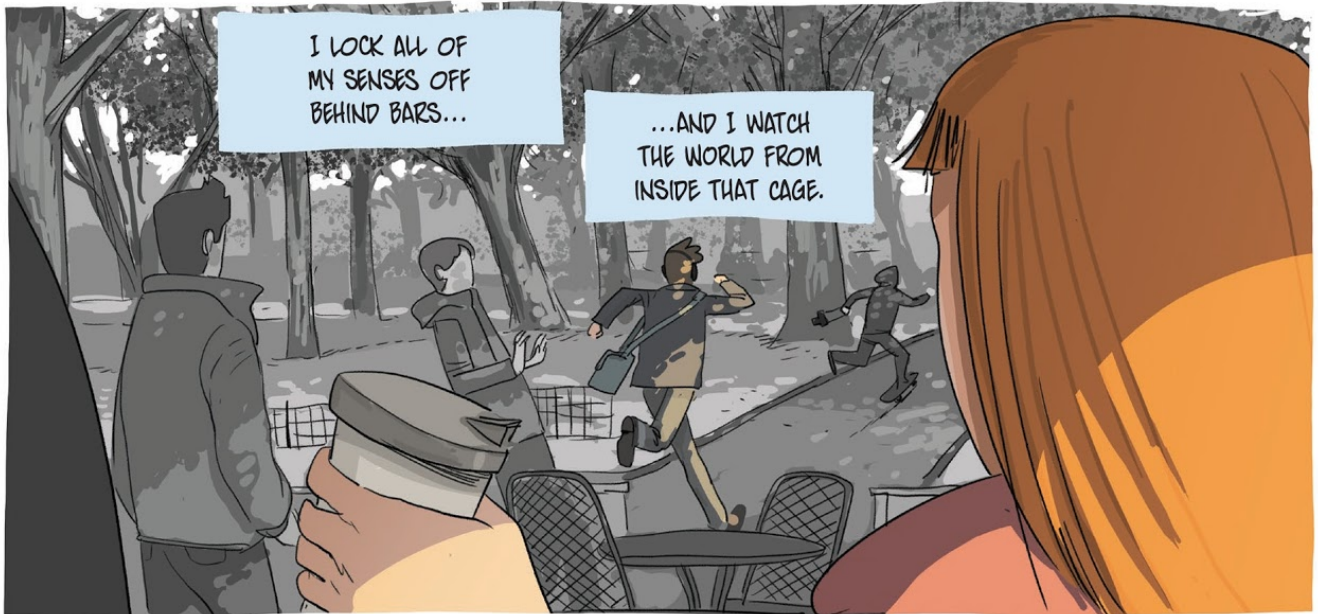


(...) LET'S BE HONEST, EVERYONE
HAS THEIR OWN WAY OF LOOKING
AT THE WORLD.

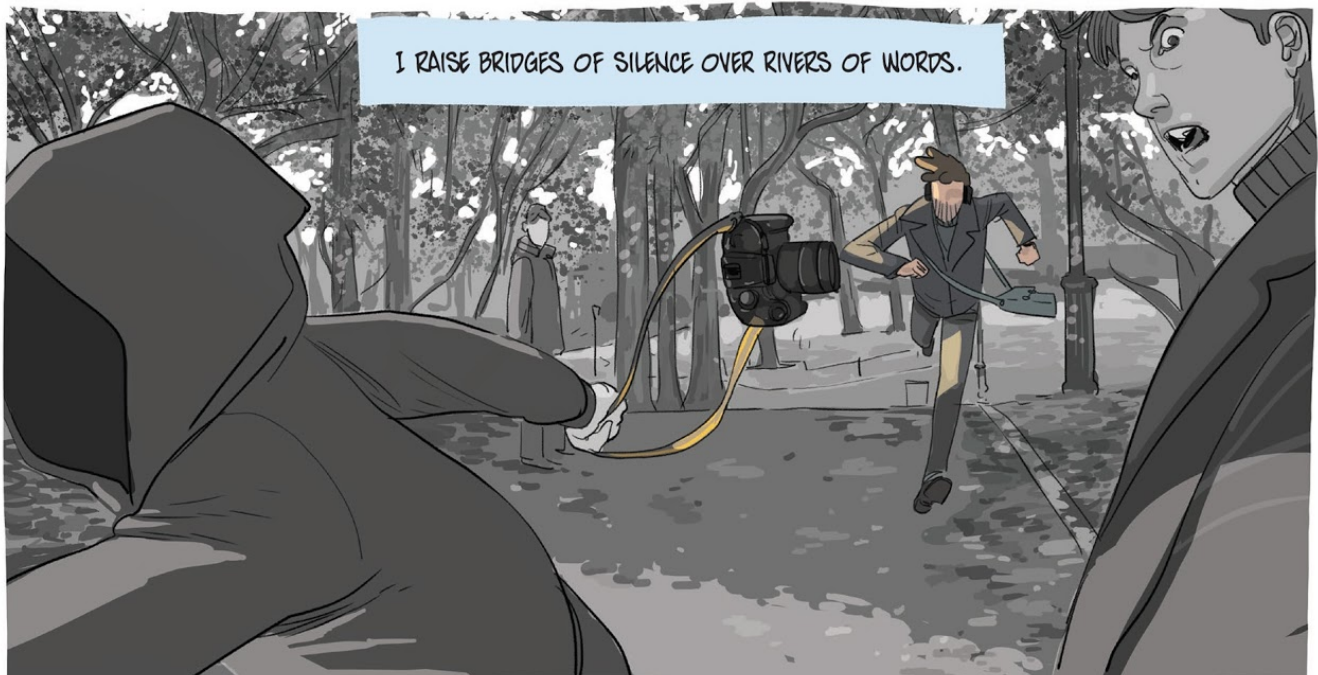


I LOCK ALL OF
MY SENSES OFF
BEHIND BARS...

...AND I WATCH
THE WORLD FROM
INSIDE THAT CAGE.



I RAISE BRIDGES OF SILENCE OVER RIVERS OF WORDS.

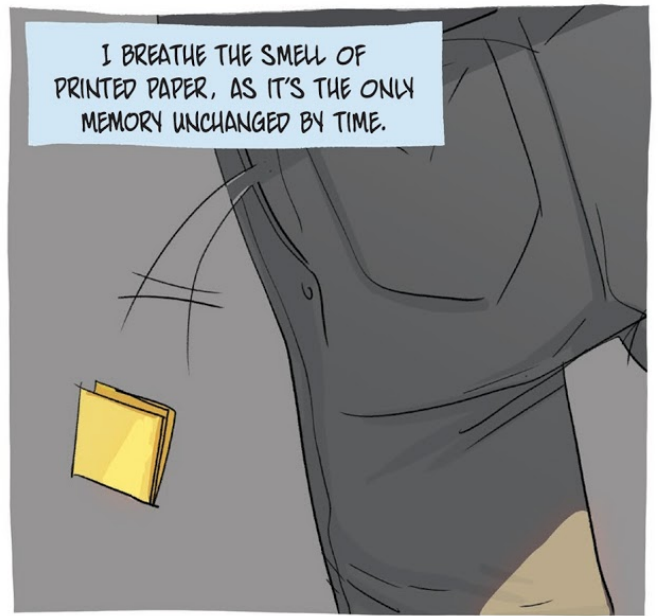




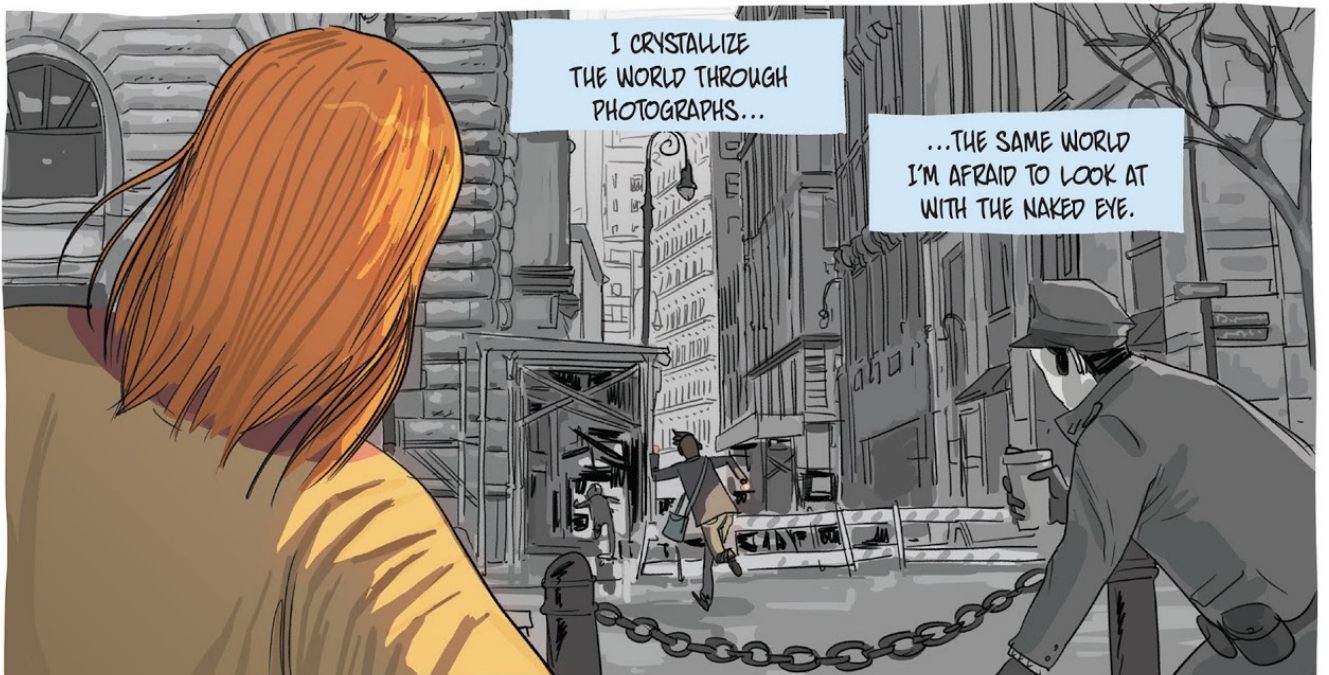
TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM THE COLD,
I TOUCH LIFE WITH GLOVES ON.



I'VE BEEN LISTENING TO
JUST ONE JAZZ SONG FOR
OVER TWENTY YEARS.

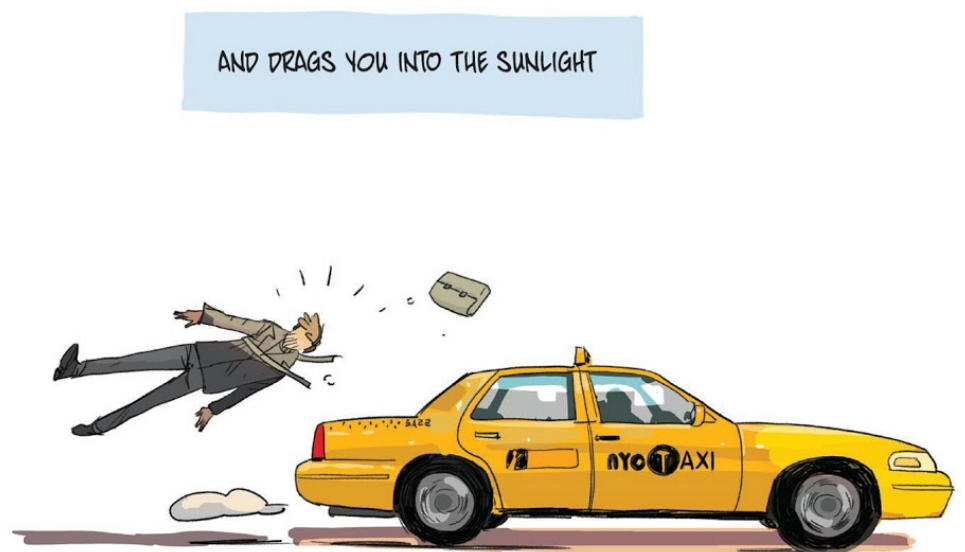
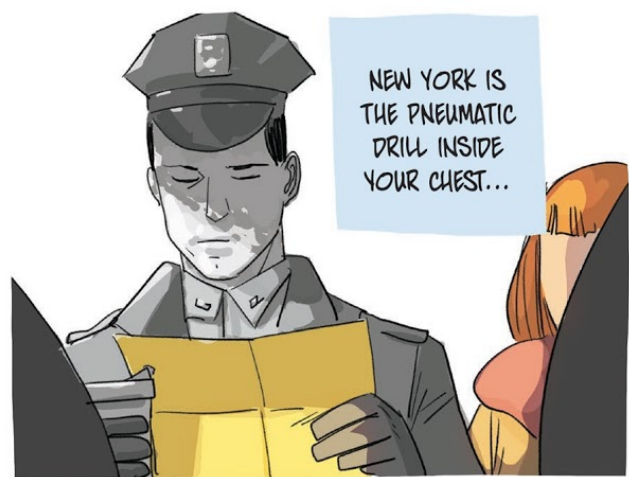


I BREATHE THE SMELL OF
PRINTED PAPER, AS IT'S THE ONLY
MEMORY UNCHANGED BY TIME.



I CRYSTALLIZE
THE WORLD THROUGH
PHOTOGRAPHS...

...THE SAME WORLD
I'M AFRAID TO LOOK AT
WITH THE NAKED EYE.



IN FRONT OF EVERYONE



SO THAT EVERYBODY CAN SEE YOU...

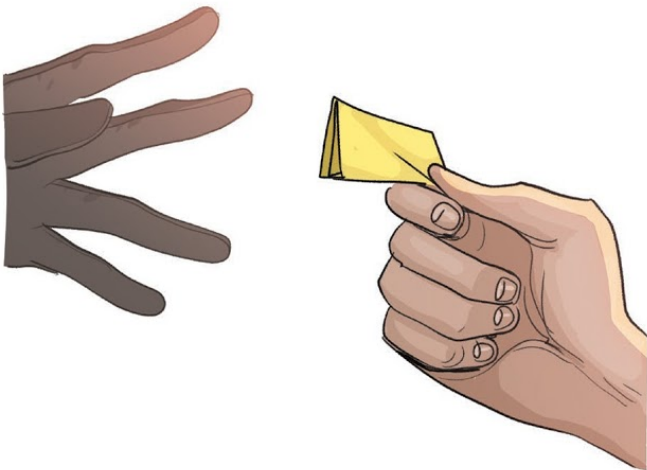


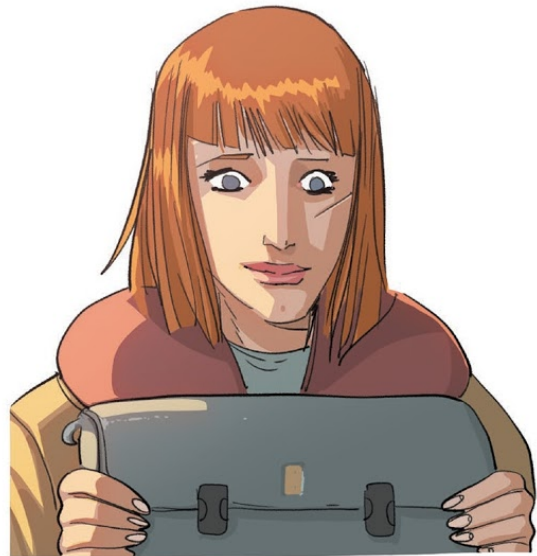
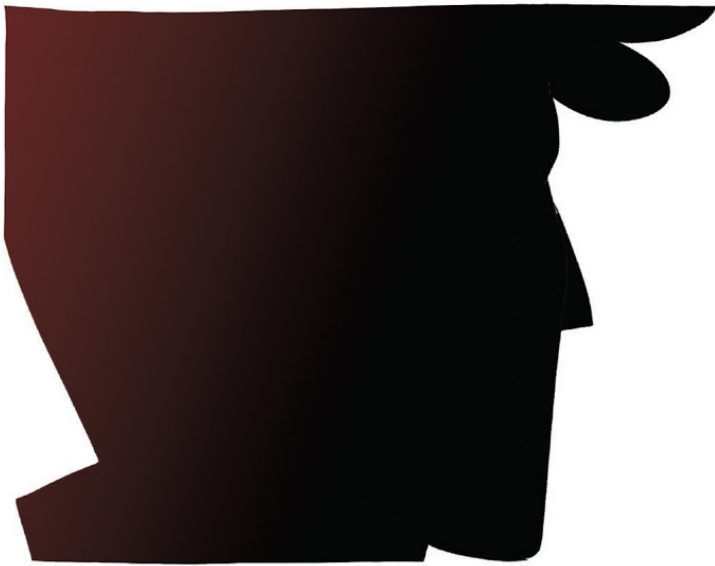
...AND YOU CAN SEE EVERYBODY (...)















DECEMBER 1ST

DECEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

(...) THESE SELF-IMPOSED RULES COME
FROM A CORE NEED OF MINE:



SUFFER AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.



RULES HELP ME
EASE THE PAIN.



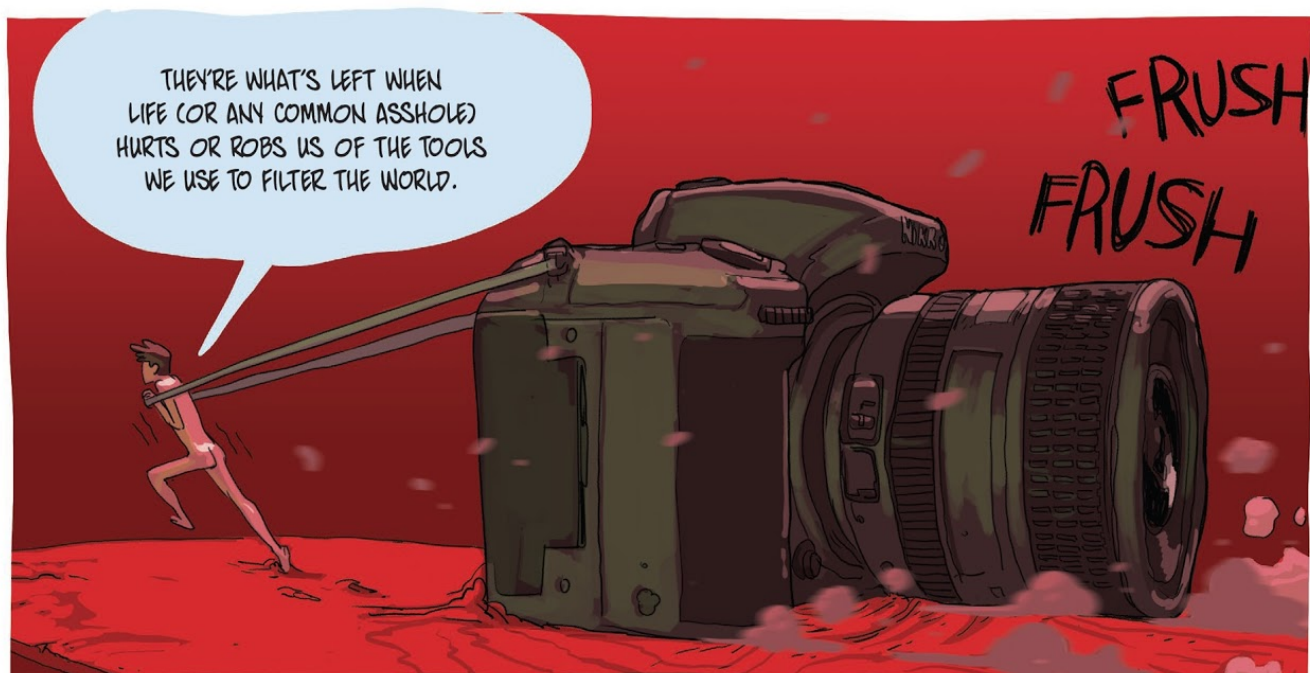
OR ENDURE IT.



OR EVEN
OVERCOME IT
UNSCATHED.

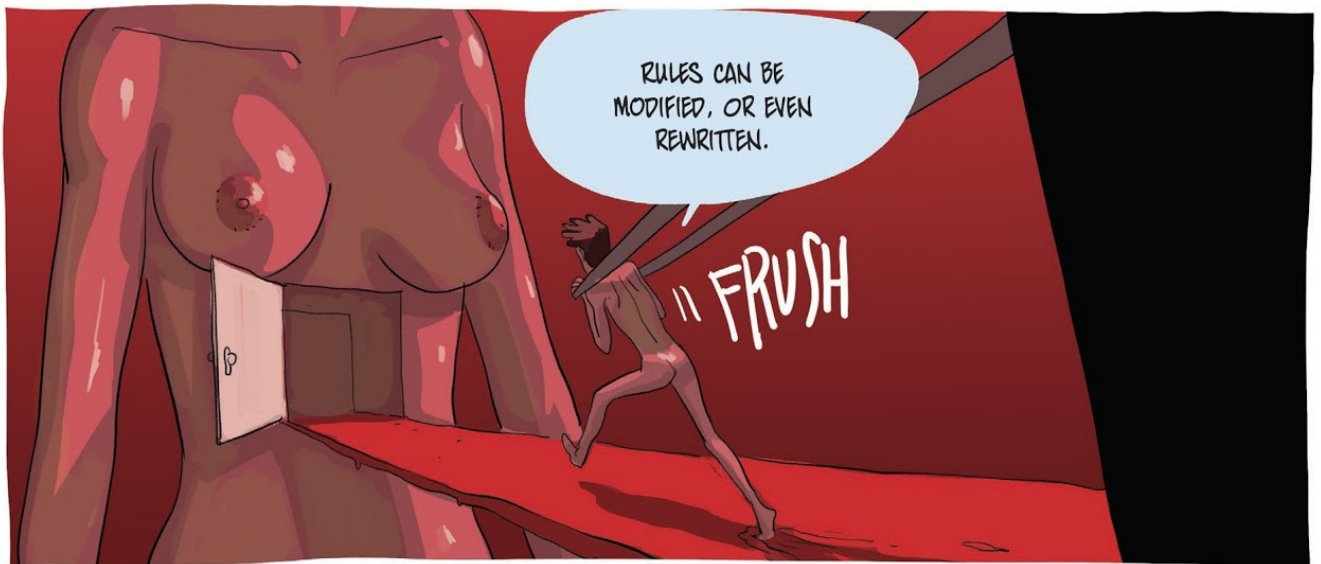


RULES ARE
THE REASON WE'RE
STILL ALIVE.



THEY'RE WHAT'S LEFT WHEN
LIFE (OR ANY COMMON ASSHOLE)
HURTS OR ROBS US OF THE TOOLS
WE USE TO FILTER THE WORLD.

FRUSH
FRUSH

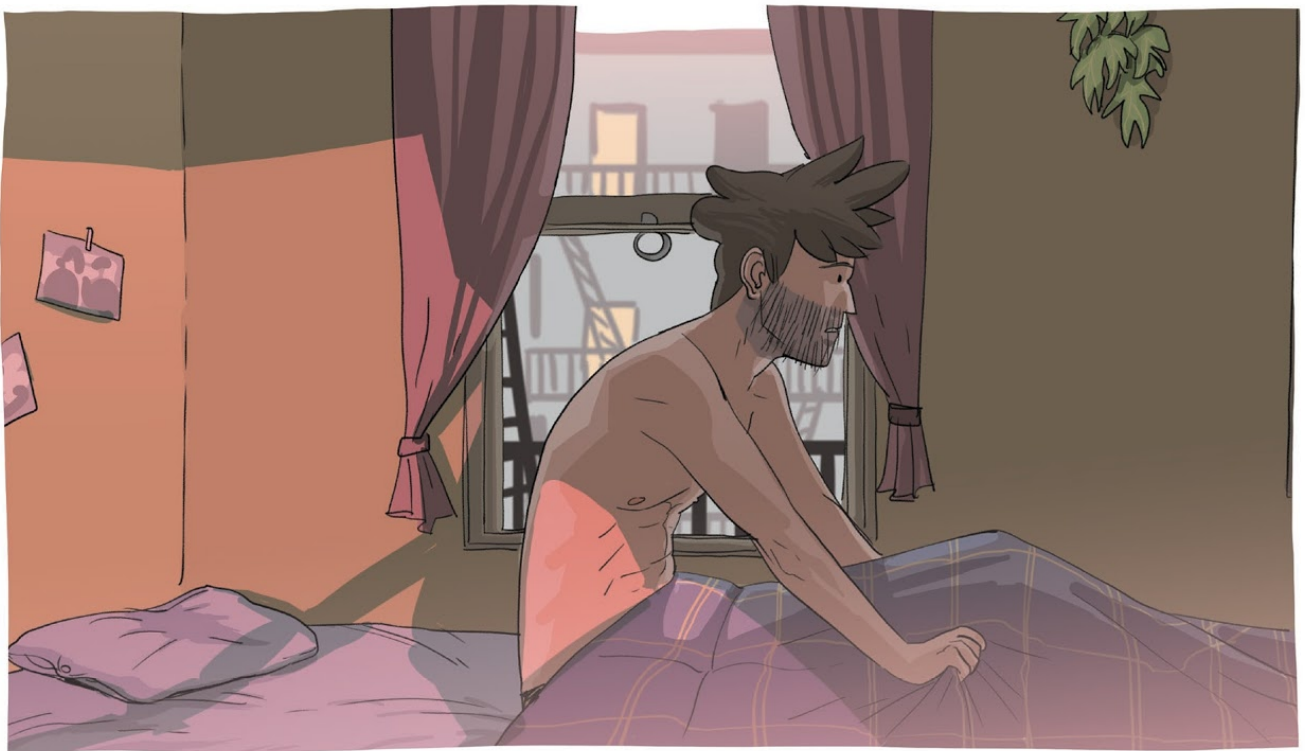


BUT FROM THE INSIDE...

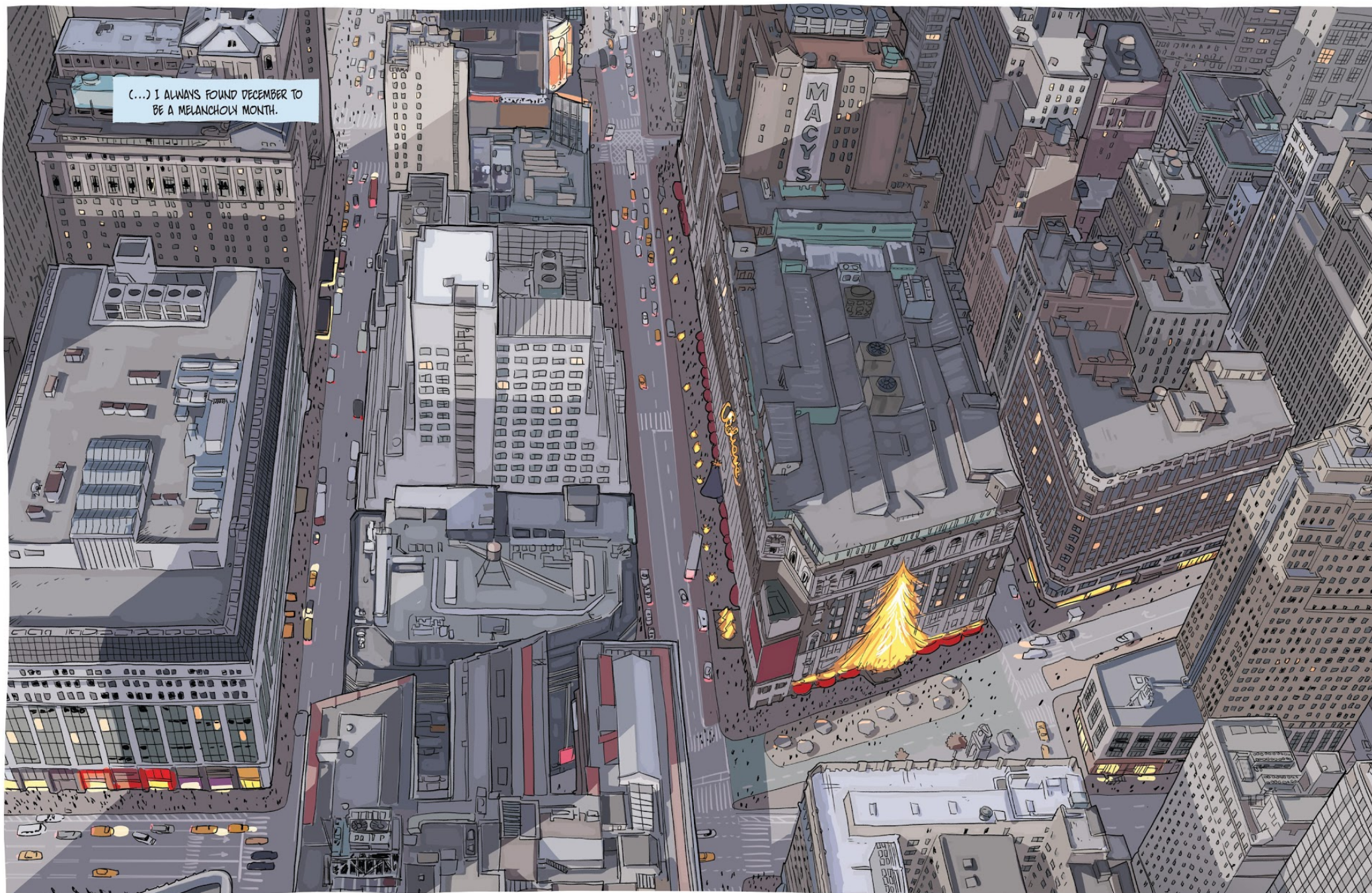
FROM THE INSIDE, EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE.















...BUT BEAUTIFUL.

DECEMBER 4TH

DECEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

(...) THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO LOOK FOR, AND JUDGE,
THEIR IDEAL PARTNER ACCORDING TO ASTROLOGICAL RULES,
STAR CHARTS, PLANETARY ALIGNMENTS, AND GRAVITATIONAL INFLUENCES.

I HAVE NO REASON TO CLAIM ANY OF THAT IS SHEER NONSENSE, BUT
I'M PERSONALLY MORE OF A "SEEING IS BELIEVING" KIND OF GUY.
(MAYBE THAT'S WHY I BECAME A PHOTOGRAPHER, WHO KNOWS.)

STILL, I THINK THE ONLY STAR WE CAN RELY ON WHERE LOVE IS CONCERNED IS THE STAR
WE CAN ALL SEE, WHICH, IN MY HUMBLE OPINION, DIVIDES THE WORLD INTO TWO KEY GROUPS:

- THOSE WHO PREFER TO WATCH IT RISE AT DAWN

- THOSE WHO PREFER TO WATCH IT SET IN THE EVENING

IN MY OPINION, THE IDEAL PARTNER IS ONE IN YOUR SAME CATEGORY.

SIMPLE AS THAT.



JUST THINK HOW MUCH EASIER IT WOULD BE:

- HEY, WHAT SIGN ARE YOU?

- SUNSET.

- NO KIDDING? ME TOO. LET'S HAVE A DRINK.

WHAT AM I GETTING AT WITH ALL OF THIS?

OH YEAH, JUST TO SAY THAT I'VE ALWAYS PREFERRED THE HUDSON
TO THE EAST RIVER. FIGURE IT OUT.

DECEMBER 8TH

DECEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

(...) NOT MANY PEOPLE CAN HEAR IT, I'M SURE.

BUT I CAN. I'M ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE.

IT'S THERE, IT ALMOST NEVER GOES AWAY, A CONSTANT PRESENCE
YOU SLOWLY GET USED TO IT BEFORE IT NEARLY DISAPPEARS, BUT THE MINUTE YOU REMEMBER IT,
IT'S BACK AND LOUDER THAN EVER.

A BACKGROUND NOISE, A MURMUR, A FIXED AND CONSTANT VIBRATION
UNDERLYING THE SOUL OF THE CITY ITSELF.

IT'S LIKE THERE ARE PERPETUALLY CHURNING
UNDERGROUND MACHINES, SLOWLY AND TIRELESSLY HUMMING.



MACHINES WITH MASSIVE WHEELS, HEAVY, BUT WELL-OILED, THAT NEVER
CREAK. THEY JUST TRANSMIT THEIR POWERFUL VIBRATIONS THROUGH EVERY WALL,
EVERY PLANK, EVERY STEEL COLUMN. AND YOU CAN ALMOST SEE THEM SHAKE.

"MANHATTAN MURMURS."

THAT WOULD MAKE A GOOD SONG TITLE.
A SONG WHERE THE BASS IS MORE POWERFUL THAN THE MELODY.

TO BE PLAYED A MAXIMUM VOLUME,
WITH THE SPEAKERS FACING THE FLOOR.

SO YOU CAN IGNORE THE MUSIC AND MELODY...

...AND JUST FEEL THE VIBRATIONS.

AND THE RHYTHM.

DECEMBER 12TH

DECEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- HEY, WHAT SIGN DID YOU SAY YOU WERE AGAIN?

- SUNSET.

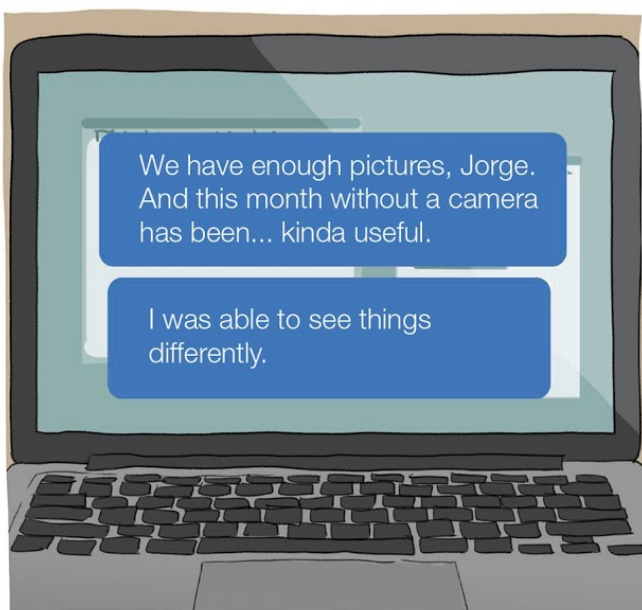


- COOL, ME TOO.

DECEMBER 14TH

DECEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

What?!? Why are you just telling me this now!? You're coming back soon! Use the credit card and buy another one! We can't publish this without pictures, man!!



Are you still hung up on that girl?

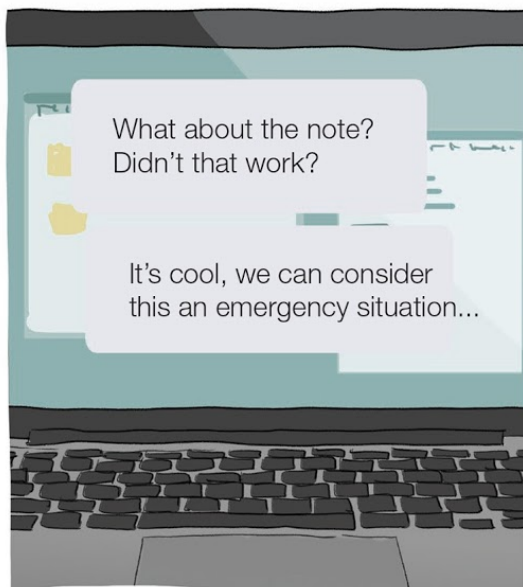


It's this city, man. It's relentless. I keep seeing her, wherever I go.

And every time, I swear, it's like it's just the two of us, with nobody else around. It's driving me nuts.

Sam, listen. Just avoid her. When you get back, I'll introduce you to a shrink I know.

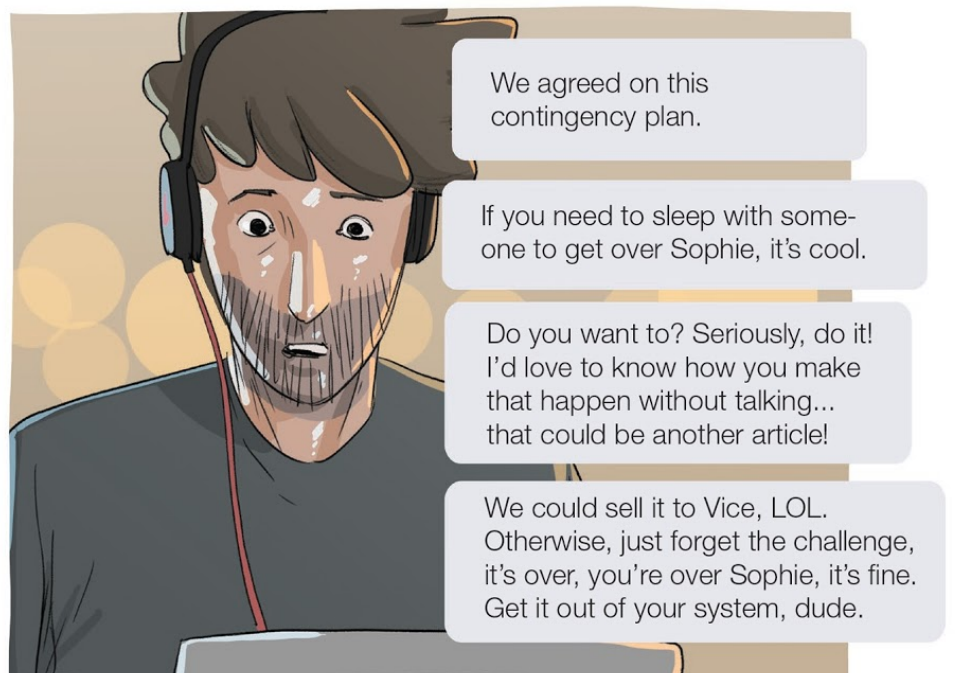
One who specializes in persecution complexes. Your mother will kill me, but it's worth the risk.



The note?

Why are you
bringing that up
now?

Oh, come on...

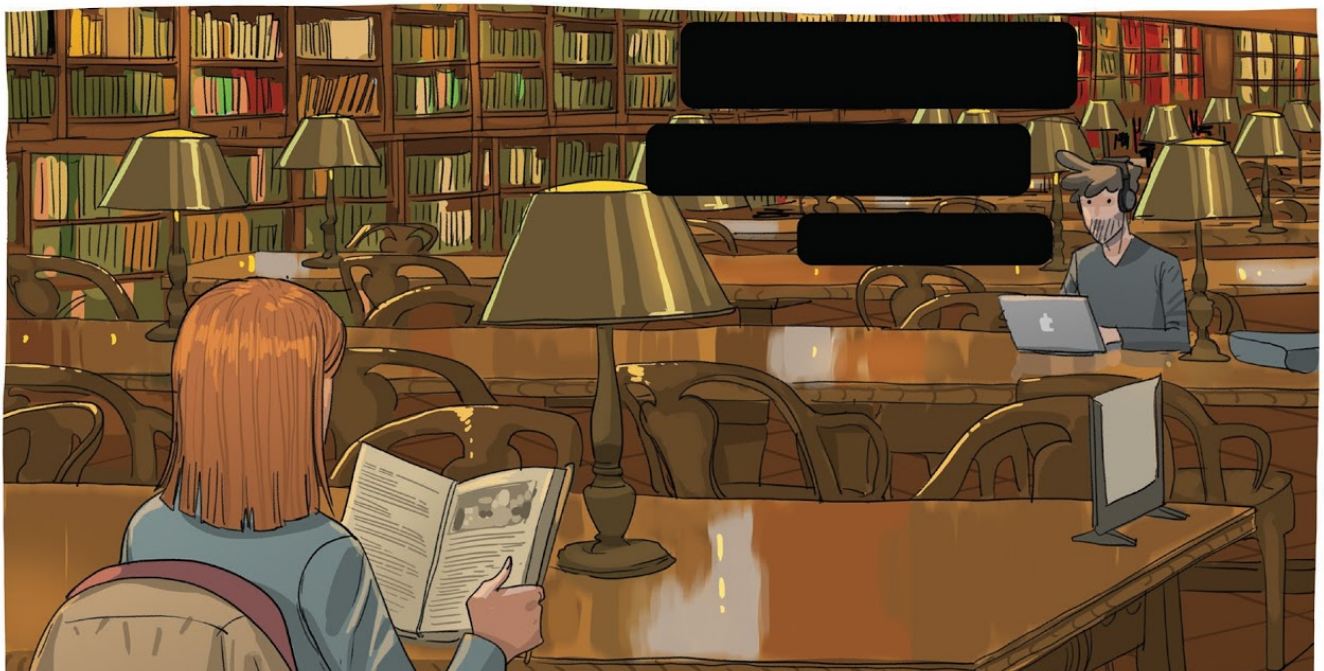
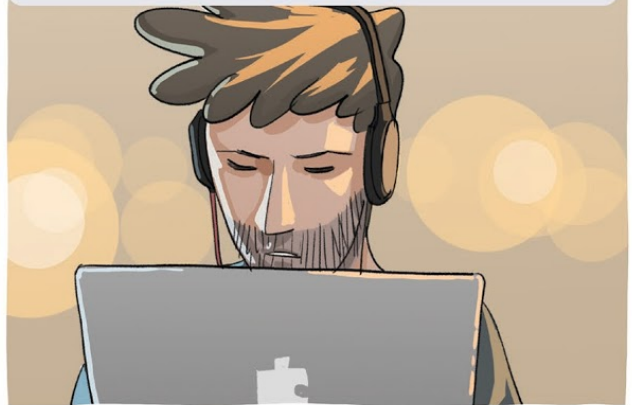


The challenge was with yourself. You won. It's okay to call it quits a few days early. The article will come out anyway, no one needs to know.

Come on, you know I can't. I have to see this through.



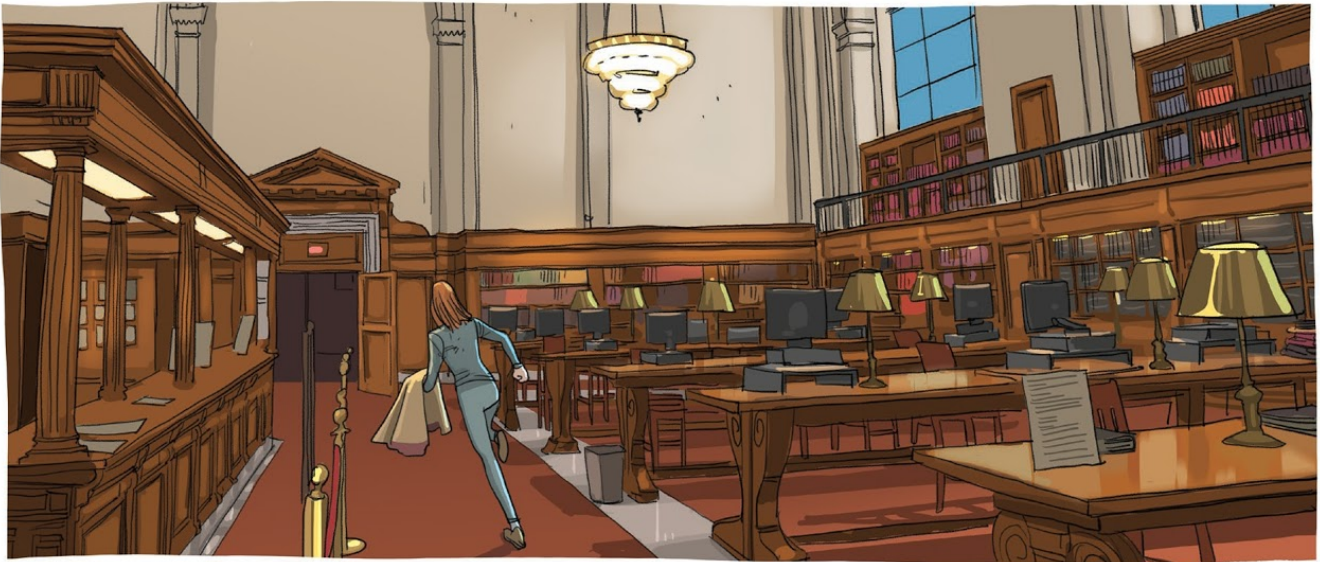
Okay, whatever, man. Besides, you mentioned the note first on... wait... November 14th. I still have the message on my phone, the day you brought the phot--





Sorry Jorgel have to go she's right there in front of me-
waving at me! I'll write later say hi to mom

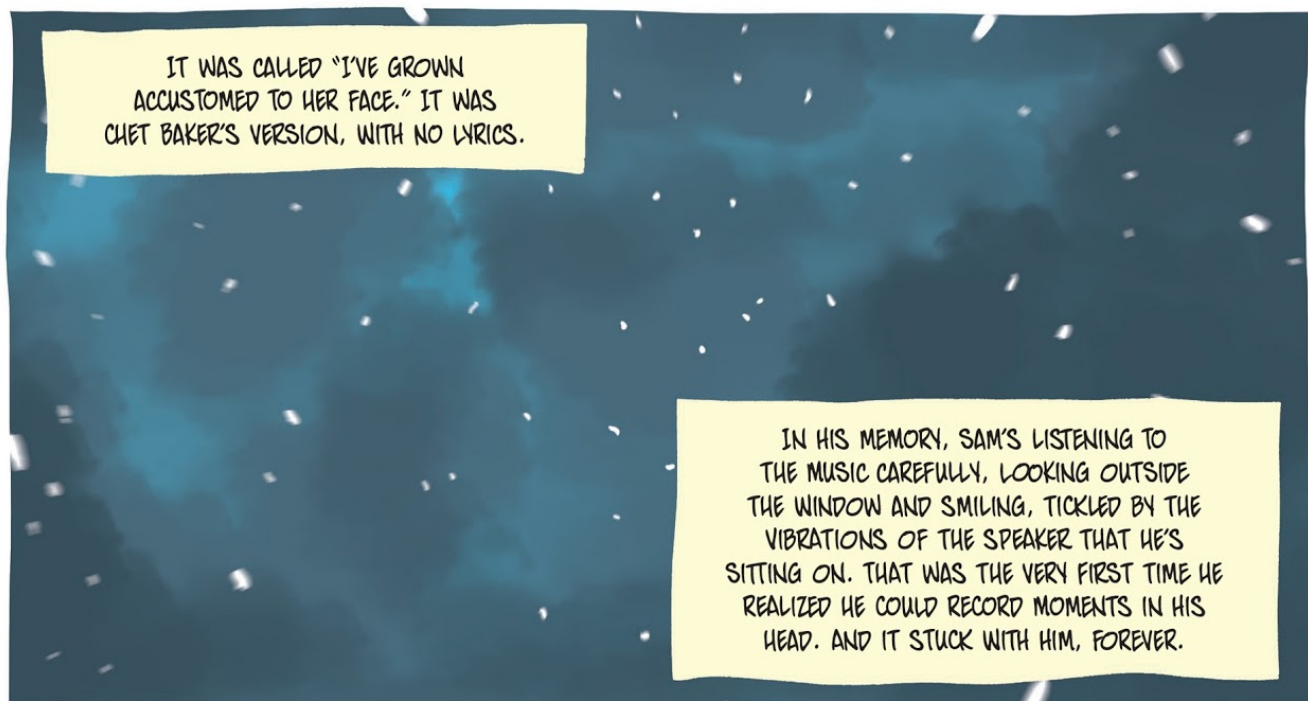




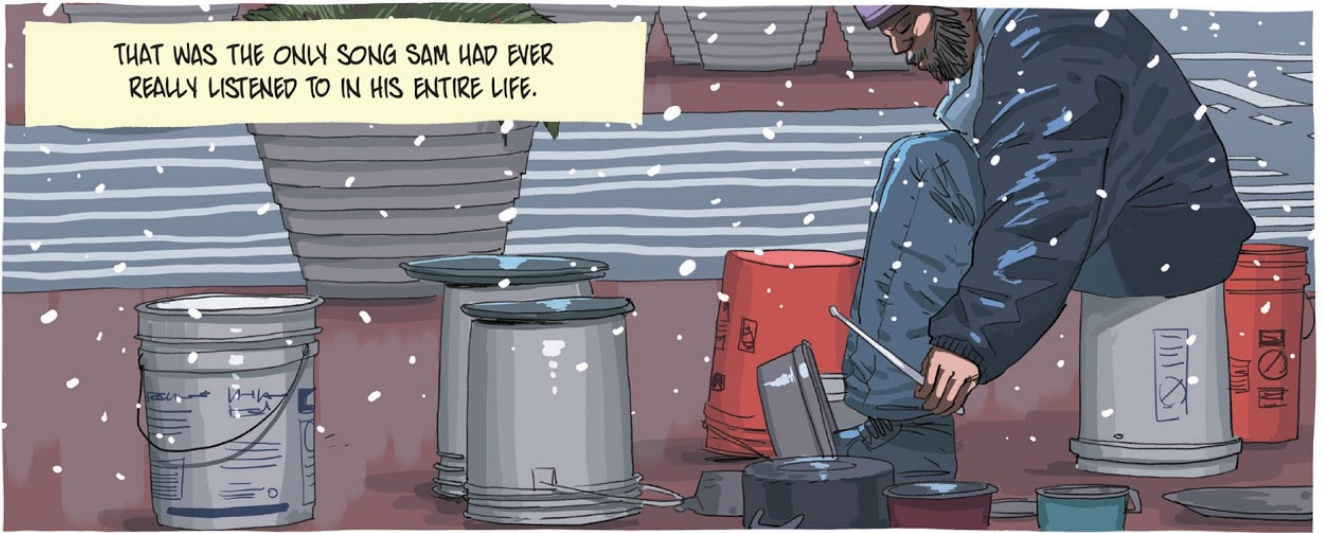
SO AS WE COME TO THE END OF
THIS STORY, LET ME ASK YOU THE SAME
QUESTION SAM ASKED IN HIS ARTICLE:



WHAT'S YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY?



THAT WAS THE ONLY SONG SAM HAD EVER
REALLY LISTENED TO IN HIS ENTIRE LIFE.



THE ONLY SONG PLAYING
IN HIS HEADPHONES EVERY
TIME HE PUT THEM ON.



IT WORMED ITS
WAY INTO HIS BRAIN
LIKE AN OBSESSION.



AND FROM THE
AGE OF THREE, IT
NEVER WENT AWAY.



...BUT THE SONG WAS PLAYING IN HIS HEADPHONES AND IN HIS
HEAD EVEN AT THAT MOMENT HE ENTERED THE MUSEUM.



IT WAS PLAYING AS HE STOOD THERE,
IN FRONT OF THE PAINTING, AS THOUGH HE
WAS WAITING FOR SOMETHING.

THEN HE
DID IT.

AFTER ALL THAT TIME,
HE DECIDED THE TIME WAS
FINALLY RIGHT.



HE SPOKE
TO ME.

AGAIN.

"WELL?"





AND I ANSWERED:

"WELL?
WELL WHAT?"

...

(...) I COULD HEAR HER VOICE
INSIDE MY HEAD. I COULD HEAR
IT CLEARLY, IT WAS A WARM,
STRANGELY FAMILIAR VOICE.

I COULD HEAR IT ABOVE
EVERYTHING ELSE, EVEN ABOVE THE
MUSIC INSIDE MY HEAD (...)

HE HEARD ME.
HE'D MANAGED TO HEAR MY
VOICE, AGAIN.

MAYBE HE REALLY WAS
LETTING ME IN.



"AREN'T... AREN'T YOU HAPPY
TO SEE ME? I SPECIFICALLY CAME
HERE TO TALK TO YOU..."



SAM, I'M ALWAYS HAPPY
TO SEE YOU.

I HAVE BEEN, EVER SINCE YOU
FIRST CAME INTO MY SHOP.



"YOUR...
SHOP?"







WHY DO YOU DO THAT?
RUN AWAY AS SOON AS
YOU SEE ME?



"WAIT...
SO THE VOICE
I'M HEARING
INSIDE MY
HEAD? IT'S..."

"...YOU?"



UH...

YEAH?!



WHO DID YOU
THINK IT WAS?

THAT LADY IN
THE PAINTING?







"HOW... HOW ARE
YOU DOING IT?"



I WORKED IT OUT
ON NOVEMBER 14TH.

DOES THAT DATE MEAN
ANYTHING TO YOU?



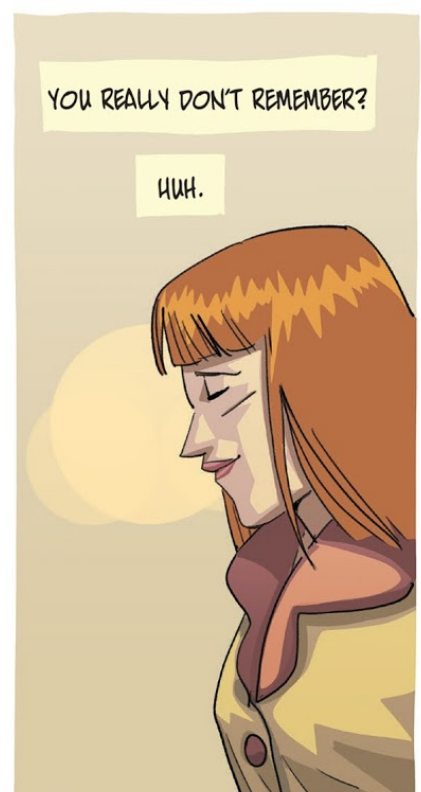
"MMH, NOT REALLY.

"SHOULD IT?"



I CALL IT

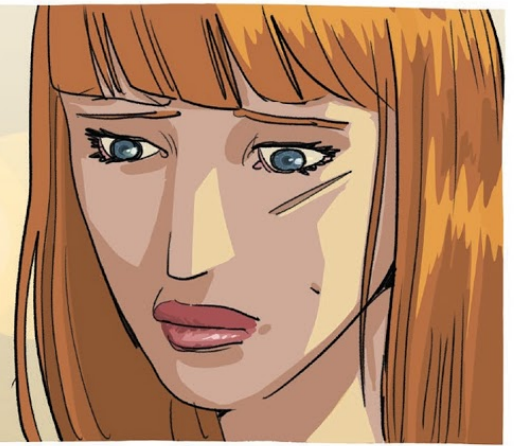
"THE DAY OF THE NOTE."



YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER?

HUH.

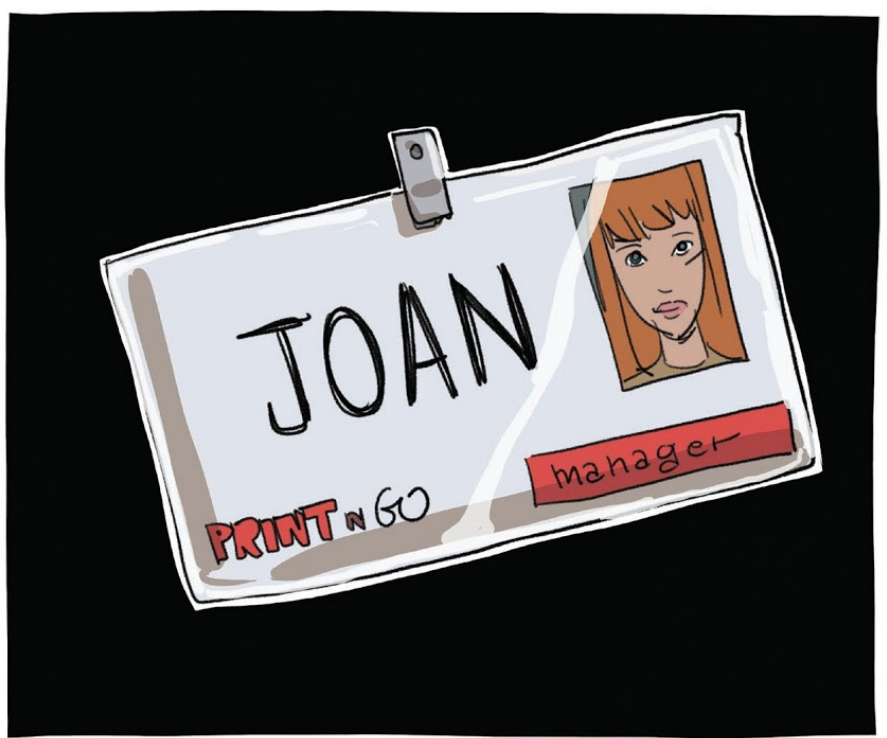
IT WAS THE DAY...

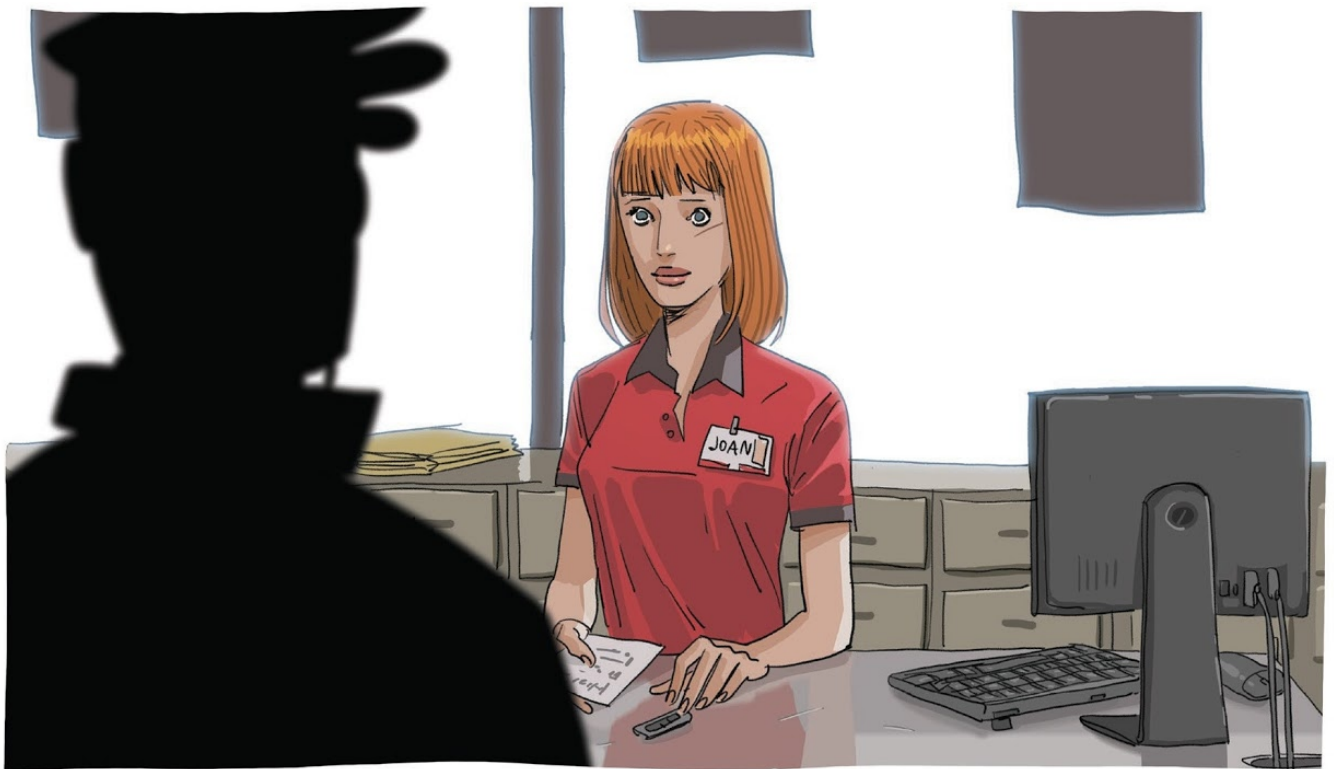


...YOU TOLD ME YOU
WERE DEAF....

...AND THAT I SHOULD
NEVER SPEAK TO YOU AGAIN.







NOVEMBER 14TH

NOVEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

(OR, "THE MAN WHO DELETED MOMENTS")

SAMUEL PAGE, USB PEN DRIVE,
PRINTING 400 PHOTOS IN
BLACK AND WHITE. OKAY.

SAMUEL PAGE...

SAMUEL PAGE, Hmm...
HAVE YOU BEEN HERE
BEFORE...?

WHY IS YOUR NAME
SO FAMILIAR?



(...) I KNOW THAT PEOPLE
READING THIS ARTICLE WILL FIND WHAT
I AM ABOUT TO SAY UTTERLY LUDICROUS,
BUT I SWEAR THIS IS HOW IT WENT.
I REMEMBER IT CLEARLY NOW.

I COULD DISTINCTLY HEAR HER
VOICE INSIDE MY HEAD, AND IT WAS
THE GREATEST AND MOST TERRIFYING
EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE.

IT WAS WARM, LIKE A KNIFE LEFT OVER A FIRE, AND
IT CUT THROUGH MY PAIN AS IF IT WERE BUTTER.

EVERY BEAT OF MY HEART WAS THE SOUND OF THE BLADE HITTING THE CUTTING BOARD.

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED THAT FLOW OF CONNECTED THOUGHTS? WHERE THEY SEEM TO LAST
AN ETERNITY, BUT WHEN THEY'RE OVER YOU REALIZE THEY ONLY LASTED A SPLIT SECOND? WELL, IT WAS
DURING ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS THAT I CAUGHT MYSELF SMILING AT HER, TALKING TO HER, HOLDING HER,
KISSING HER, AND, LAST BUT NOT LEAST, CRYING IN HER ARMS IN A WAY I HADN'T FOR QUITE SOME TIME.

IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS I REALIZED I WASN'T READY FOR THAT,
I WASN'T READY FOR ANY OF WHAT I HAD JUST SEEN A MOMENT EARLIER.
WEIRD, RIGHT?

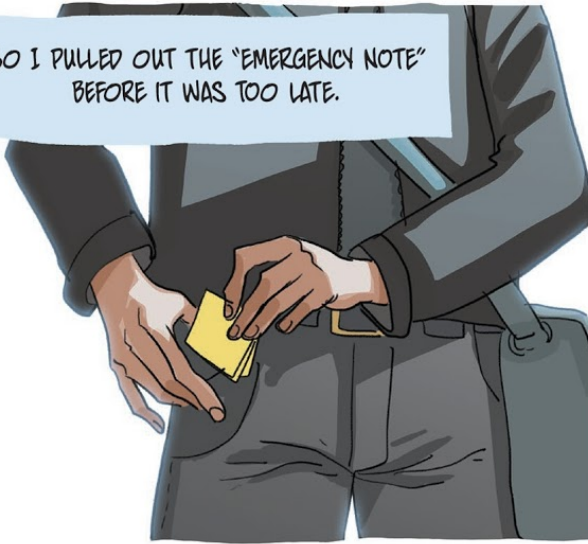


BECAUSE YOU CAN'T JUST CUT OFF PAIN LIKE THAT.

IT WASN'T RIGHT.

NOT THAT KIND OF PAIN.

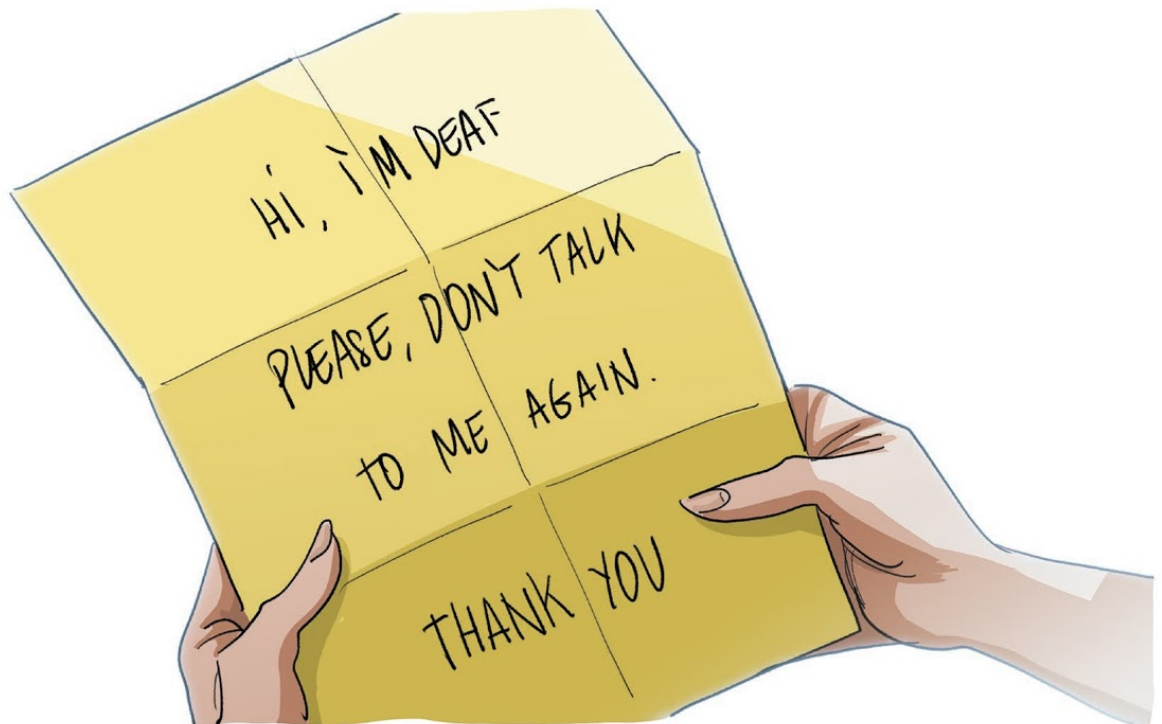
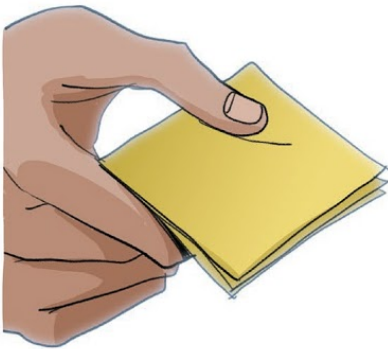
SO I PULLED OUT THE "EMERGENCY NOTE"
BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE.



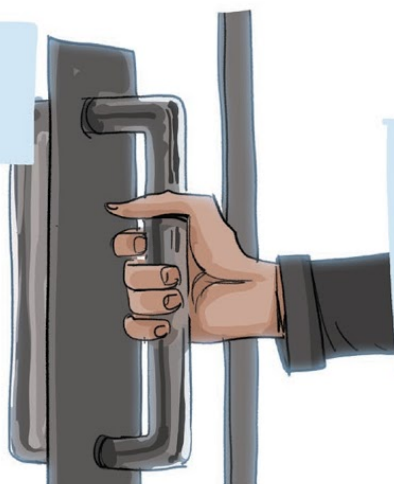
SAMUEL PAGE...
OF COURSE!



AND I GAVE IT
TO HER.



THEN I LEFT
THE SHOP.



AND SENT A
MESSAGE TO JORGE
TELLING HIM WHAT
JUST HAPPENED.

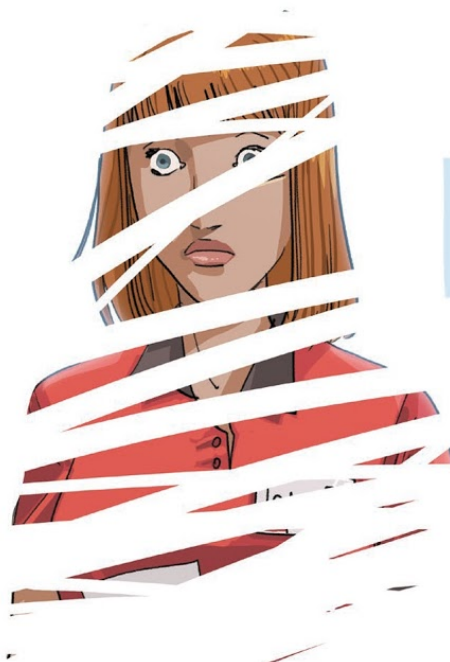


I ASKED HIM NEVER
TO BRING UP THIS
EXPERIENCE EVER
AGAIN.

THEN I CLOSED
MY EYES...

...AND ERASED HER
FROM MY MEMORY.

HER AND HER VOICE.



JUST LIKE DELETING A PHOTO
ON THE COMPUTER.

BECAUSE I WASN'T READY.



IT WASN'T
RIGHT.



YOU CAN'T JUST CUT OFF
PAIN LIKE THAT...

...IN A SECOND.



NOT THAT KIND OF PAIN.



NOT THAT KIND.





NOVEMBER 14TH

NOVEMBER						
MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

(OR, "THE JOAN WHO HEARD VOICES")

SAMUEL PAGE, USB PEN DRIVE,
PRINTING 400 PHOTOS IN
BLACK AND WHITE. OKAY.

SAMUEL PAGE...

SAMUEL PAGE, Hmm...
HAVE YOU BEEN HERE
BEFORE...?

WHY IS YOUR NAME
SO FAMILIAR?

SAMUEL PAGE...



SAMUEL PAGE WAS STARING AT ME
AS IF HE'D GOT THE GREATEST
SHOCK OF HIS LIFE. AND AS
HE WAS STARING AT ME...

...I GOT THE GREATEST
SHOCK OF MINE.

"SHITSHITSHITSHITSHITSHITSHIT!"

I COULD HEAR HIS VOICE INSIDE MY HEAD. CRYSTAL CLEAR. I KNOW THAT THOSE WHO FOUND HIS ARTICLE RIDICULOUS WILL FEEL THE SAME ABOUT MY VERSION OF EVENTS, TOO, BUT I SWEAR THAT THIS IS EXACTLY HOW IT WENT. FOR ME, TOO.

I MEAN, IT'S NOT AS THOUGH HE WAS SAYING INTERESTING STUFF.

"SHIT FUCKSHIT WHERE DID I PUT IT, SHIT!"

BUT IT WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST AND MOST TERRIFYING EXPERIENCES OF MY LIFE.



THEN HE SAID SOMETHING UNDERSTANDABLE.

"CAN'T LET HER TALK, NOT ANYMORE, NOPE,
CAN'T LET HER INSIDE MY HEAD"

COULD HE HEAR ME, TOO?
COULD SAMUEL PAGE HEAR MY VOICE AS
CLEARLY AS I COULD HEAR HIS?

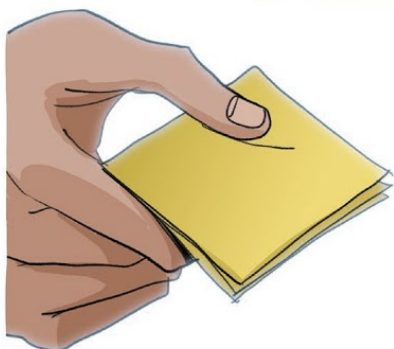


AND THAT'S WHEN
I REMEMBERED
EVERYTHING.



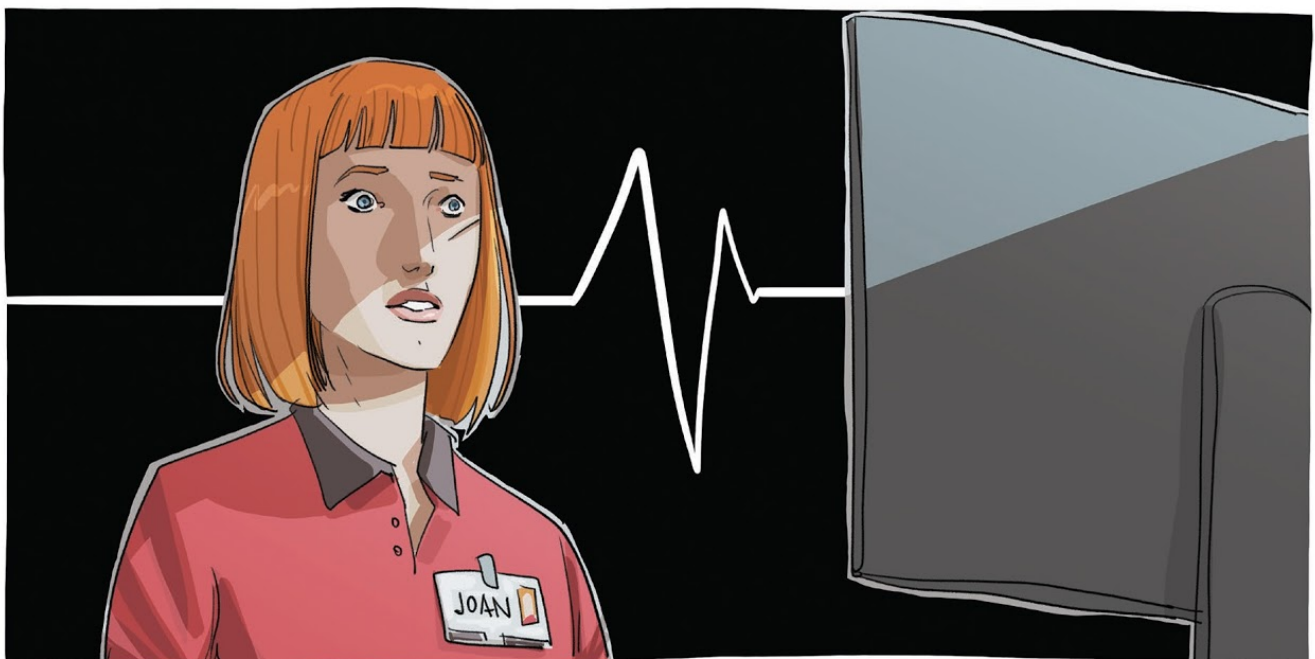
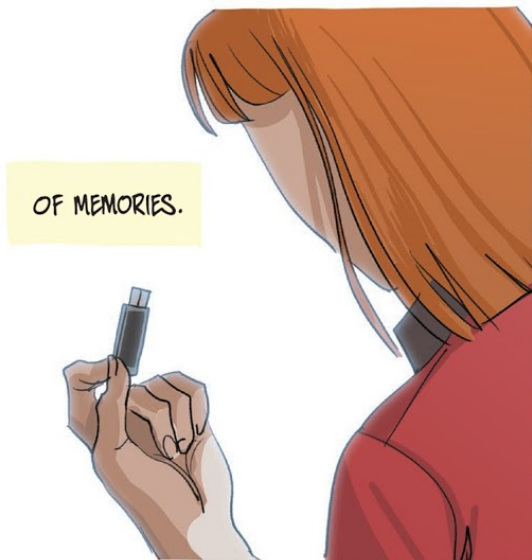
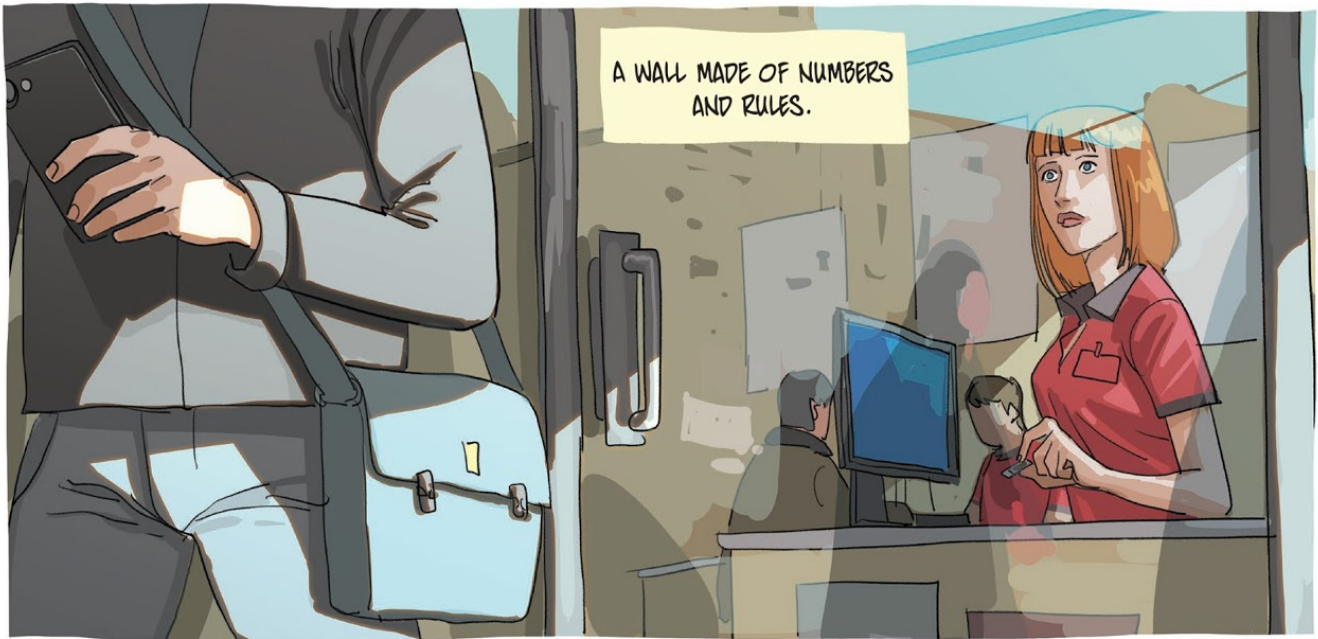
SAMUEL PAGE...
OF COURSE!

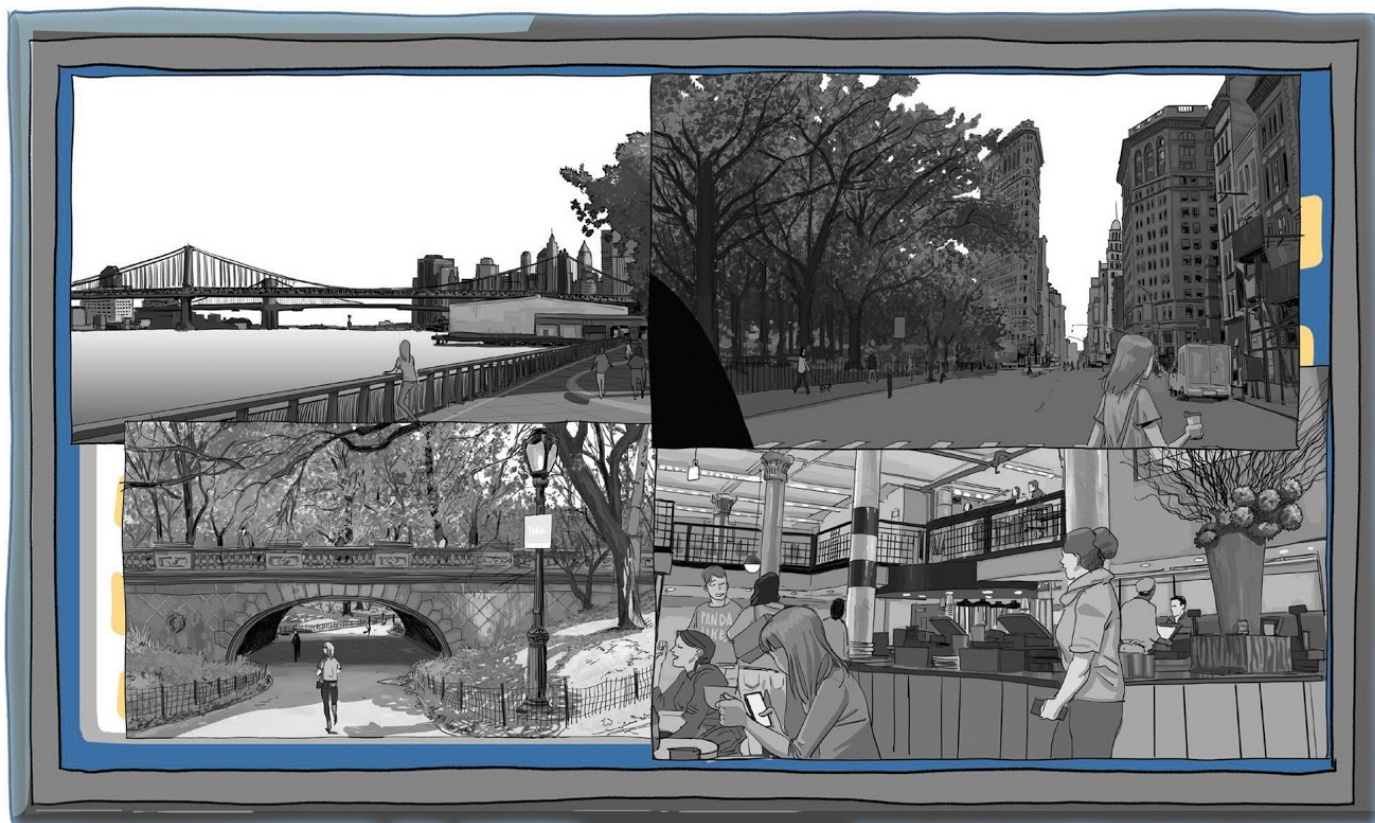
BUT BEFORE I COULD
SAY ANYTHING...



HE RAISED A WALL.







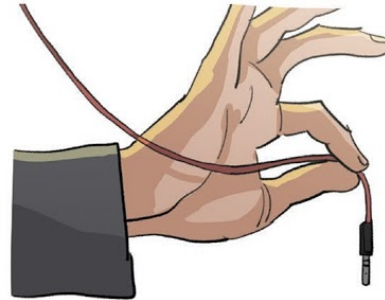
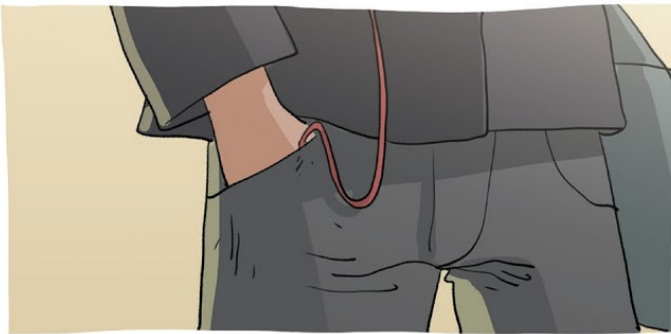
A WALL, HOWEVER, THAT THIS CITY HAD
ALREADY STARTED TO CARVE THROUGH.

AND ME? WELL, I DECIDED TO
HELP HER TEAR IT DOWN.

QUITE HAPPILY.



THE ELBOW





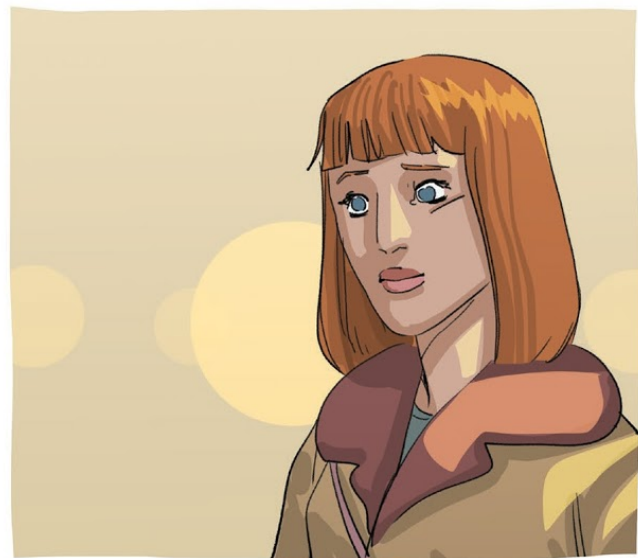
HAH!
THEY WEREN'T
EVEN CONNECTED
TO ANYTHING.
GENIUS...



PEOPLE AREN'T
GOING TO COME
ANYWHERE NEAR
YOU WITH THOSE
ON ALL THE TIME.



"WHY ARE YOU
DOING THIS?
WHAT DO YOU
WANT FROM
ME?"



I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE
FIGURED IT OUT BY NOW.

IT'S THE CITY, SAM.



SHE ASKED ME TO.



"OK, I'M OBVIOUSLY HAVING AN ISOLATION-INDUCED NERVOUS BREAKDOWN..."



"I'M HEARING VOICES IN MY HEAD, AND I'M TALKING TO A LOON WHO'S BEEN STALKING ME FOR ALMOST TWO MONTHS..."



"THANKS, BUT WHATEVER YOU WANT, I'M NOT INTERESTED. I'M NOT READY, I'M NOT--"



OK, SAM,
JUST WAIT.

CAN I GIVE YOU
SOMETHING BEFORE
YOU GO?



"WHAT?"









NOW DO YOU
BELIEVE ME?



"HOW... HOW
DID YOU DO THAT?"



I DON'T KNOW.
I THINK SOME PEOPLE
ARE MORE OPEN TO
SEEING THE SPIRIT OF
A PLACE THAN
OTHERS.

THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS
THOUGHT ABOUT MYSELF.



THIS IS A CITY SURROUNDED
BY WATER AND CUT BY WIND.

SOME PEOPLE FIGHT THE TIDE...

SWIMMING AGAINST THE CURRENT...



...OTHERS GIVE IN TO IT.

THEY RIDE IT.

THEY FOLLOW IT.

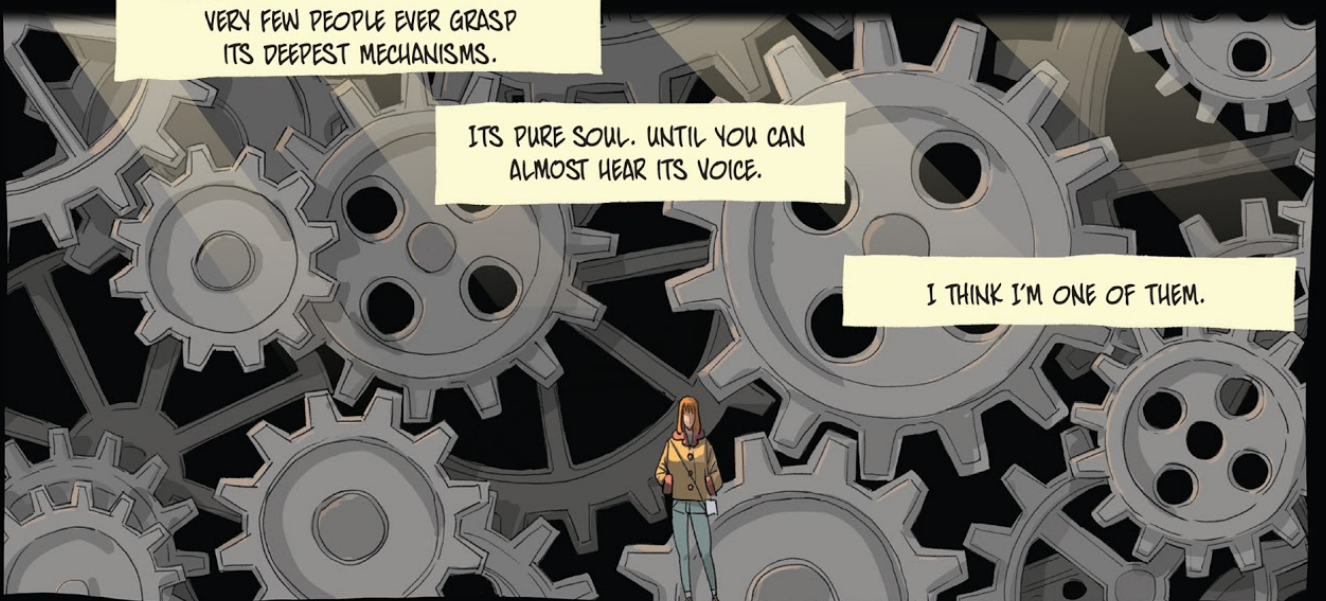
THEY UNDERSTAND IT.



VERY FEW PEOPLE EVER GRASP
ITS DEEPEST MECHANISMS.

ITS PURE SOUL. UNTIL YOU CAN
ALMOST HEAR ITS VOICE.

I THINK I'M ONE OF THEM.





"'NEW YORK ASKED ME TO...' DO YOU REALISE HOW CLOSE THAT SOUNDS TO 'THE VOICES INSIDE MY HEAD TOLD ME TO KILL HIM!'"



HAH! YEAH, TRUE!

BUT YOU'LL EXCUSE ME IF I DON'T LET SOMEONE WHO CAN ERASE MEMORIES FROM HIS OWN MIND AS IF THEY WERE PHOTOGRAPHS CALL ME "CRAZY."



I GUESS WE'RE ALL UNIQUE IN OUR OWN WAY, HUH?



"BUT WHY ME? I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND..."



BECAUSE I KNEW YOU WERE READY, AND THE CITY CONFIRMED IT...



"LOOK, NOBODY DECIDES WHETHER I'M READY OR NOT--"

SAM...



DO YOU KNOW WHO CARL AND ENRIQUE ARE?

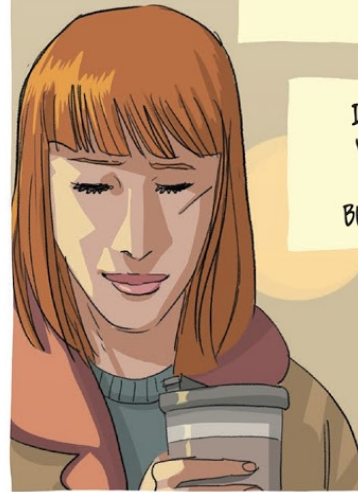
"CARL AND ENRIQUE?
NO..."

"SHOULD I?"



CARL AND ENRIQUE FIRST
MET IN A COFFEE SHOP ON
FIFTEENTH.

I MET THEM IN THE
VERY SAME COFFEE
SHOP THE WEEK
BEFORE THEY MOVED.

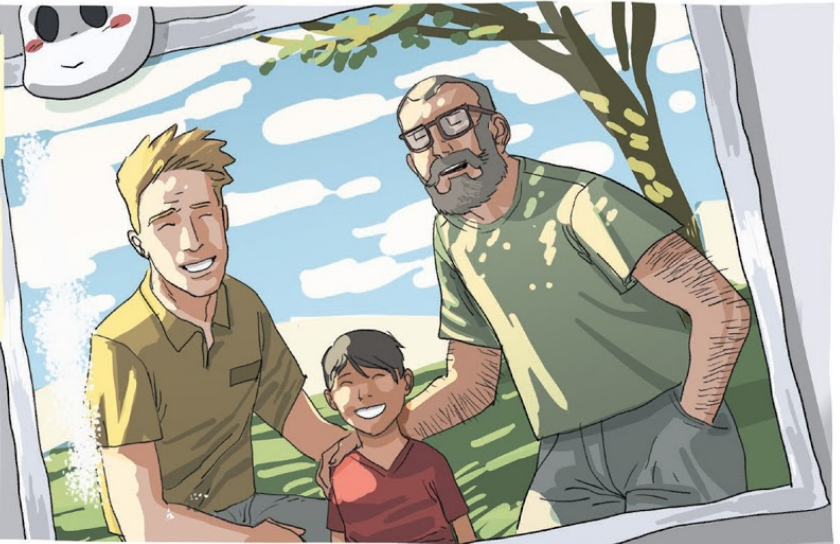


THEY LIVE IN CHICAGO NOW,
WITH A BEAUTIFUL TWO-YEAR-
OLD SON.

THE BED I SLEEP ON
WAS THEIRS, THEY GAVE IT
TO ME BEFORE THEY LEFT.

- Avocado
- tomato
- Chip
- lime
- Toilet paper

NICE, HUH?



AND LING USED TO COME INTO MY SHOP
TO HAVE HER HEADSHOTS PRINTED. WE'D SPEND
HOURS TALKING ABOUT MOVIES. SHE LIVES IN LOS
ANGELES NOW, AND TWO MONTHS AGO SHE LANDED
A SMALL ROLE IN A VERY SUCCESSFUL TV SERIES.

I KEEP THE ISSUE OF A
MAGAZINE I BOUGHT AT
RANDOM, ONE WITH AN
ARTICLE ABOUT HER, IN
THE BOOKCASE SHE LEFT
FOR ME.



I HAVE A MUG WITH THE PICTURE OF TWO GIRLS ON IT, WITH THE CAPTION "MAY OUR FRIENDSHIP NEVER END."



I FOUND IT IN THE GARBAGE.



I DON'T KNOW WHO THIS JACKET BELONGED TO BEFORE ME.



I DON'T KNOW WHO LIVED IN MY HOUSE BEFORE ME.

A HOUSE FULL OF OBJECTS, FULL OF HISTORY, A PAST...



...THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.

THIS CITY'S JUST TEMPORARY, SAM. LIVES FULL OF DREAMS, HISTORY, HOPES AND PAIN... THEY ALL DART THROUGH IT.



THEY COLLIDE LIKE MARBLES, ONLY TO SPEED OFF AGAIN IN OTHER DIRECTIONS.

SOME OF THEM LEAVE PIECES BEHIND.

PIECES OF HISTORY.



AND NONE OF THEM ARE EVER READY.

NONE.

NO ONE IS READY WHEN THEY FIRST GET HERE.

AND NO ONE IS EVER READY TO LEAVE AGAIN.

"SO WHAT? WERE
MARBLES, TOO?"

EXACTLY.

EXCEPT INSTEAD OF
FLYING OFF AFTER
COLLIDING...

...WE
MERGED.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY WE
CAN HEAR EACH OTHER'S
THOUGHTS SO CLEARLY,
I DON'T KNOW..

BUT THE CITY DECIDED ALL
OF THIS, NOT ME.

NOT YOU.

SEE, I'VE GOT A
VERY OLD CHEST
OF DRAWERS AT
HOME...

I GOT IT AT A FLEA
MARKET ON TWENTY-
FIFTH YEARS AGO.

I GUESS NOBODY EVER THOUGHT
TO REMOVE THE DRAWERS TO GIVE
IT A GOOD CLEAN.

ONE, TWO,
THREE, FOUR...

(...) I'LL ASK
YOU AGAIN:

WHAT'S YOUR
EARLIEST MEMORY?

(...) MY FIRST MEMORY IS A SONG CALLED
"I'VE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO HER FACE." IT HAS BILL EVANS ON PIANO,
FOLLOWED BY CHET BAKER'S TRUMPET,

PUNCTUATED BY THE HORNS ON FIRST AVENUE,

AND THE SIREN FROM A RANDOM FIRETRUCK.

IT'S THE LOW, DEEP VIBRATIONS OF THE DOUBLE BASS THROUGH THE LOW-
SPEAKER THAT TICKLE MY HEART, AND MY BACKSIDE.

I COUNT TO FOUR, TO THE BEAT OF THE MUSIC, BECAUSE IT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST
THINGS MY FATHER TAUGHT ME TO DO.



SOME OF YOU MIGHT FIND HAVING A SONG STUCK IN YOUR HEAD,
EVEN FOR JUST A SHORT WHILE, ANNOYING.

BUT FOR ME, AFTER LOSING MY HEARING, I LIVED MY LIFE TO THE SOUND
OF JUST ONE SONG, TRYING NEVER TO FORGET IT.

THE SAME BACKGROUND MUSIC TO EVERY BOOK I READ.

THE SAME SOUNDTRACK TO EVERY MOVIE I EVER SAW.

THE SAME SONG TO STEER ME THROUGH THIS LIFE.

THE SAME SONG IN TIMES OF SORROW.

THE SAME LOVE SONG.



IT WASN'T HER VOICE IN MY HEAD THAT SHOCKED ME, THAT
DAY, IN THE PRINT SHOP. AT LAST, I WAS CERTAIN OF IT.

IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE I HADN'T HEARD IN AGES.

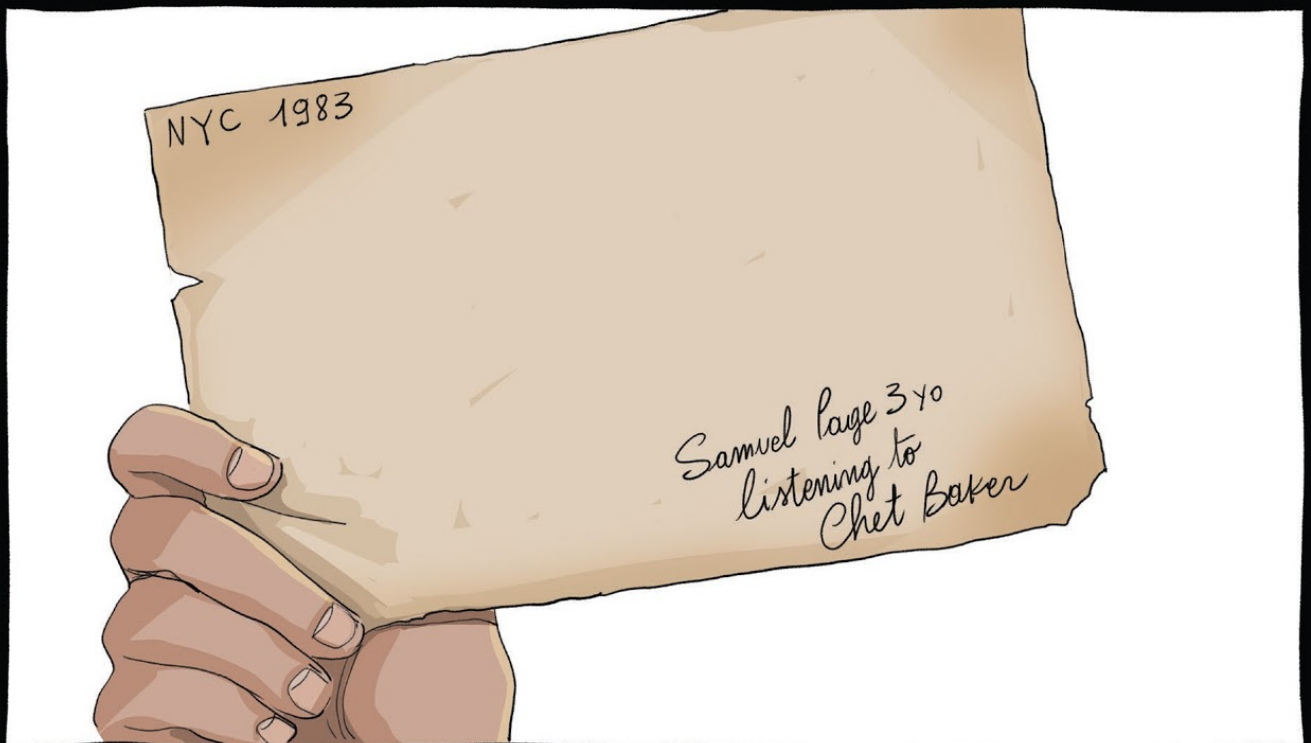
BUT AS I CLUTCHED THAT PHOTOGRAPH,
I COULD HEAR IT AGAIN, SO CLEARLY NOW.

I HEARD THE HORNS, MIXED IN WITH THE PIANO, A SIREN AGAINST
A SOPRANO SAX, THE CITY'S MURMUR GIVING THE DOUBLE BASS ITS BEAT AND
VIBRATING INSIDE MY BODY, FROM THE FEET UP

AND ABOVE ALL OF THIS, I FELT IT, THE BEATING OF A HEART.

A HEART THAT WAS TIMED PERFECTLY TO THE MUSIC.

MUSIC IN PERFECT SYNCHRONIZATION WITH THE HUGE AND HEAVY
MECHANISMS OF AN ENTIRE CITY.



ONE, TWO,
THREE, FOUR...

COUNTING HELPED ME FORGET ABOUT LUCK,
LUCK MADE ME NERVOUS.

LUCK COULD CONFUSE A CHALLENGE WITH A CRY FOR HELP.

BUT IT CAN ALSO TURN THE MECHANISMS OF AN ENTIRE CITY, AND
DRAG YOU TO THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

LUCK CAN BE THE MOST FRIGHTENING THING IN THE WORLD.

BECAUSE THERE ARE NO RULES AGAINST IT.

THE ONLY THING YOU
CAN DO IS COUNT.

ONE, TWO,
THREE, FOUR...





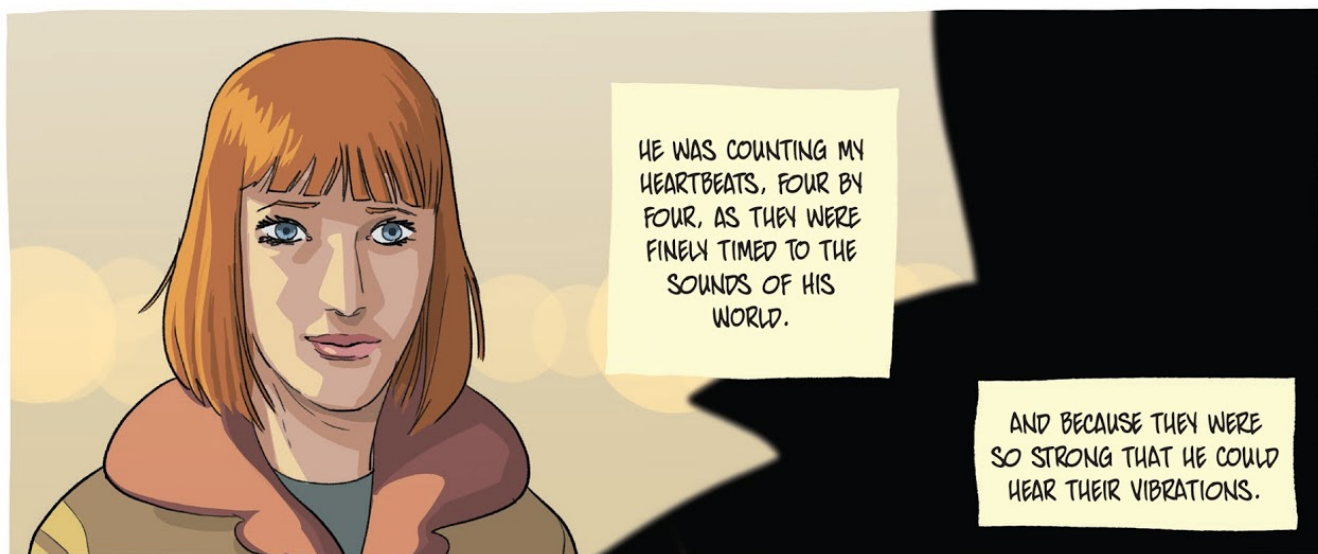


SAM HATED NUMBERS, BUT HE COUNTED EVERYTHING.



COUNTING HELPED HIM FORGET ABOUT LUCK.

LUCK MADE HIM NERVOUS.



HE WAS COUNTING MY HEARTBEATS, FOUR BY FOUR, AS THEY WERE FINELY TIMED TO THE SOUNDS OF HIS WORLD.

AND BECAUSE THEY WERE SO STRONG THAT HE COULD HEAR THEIR VIBRATIONS.



HE COULDN'T AVOID ME ANYMORE.



SO HE CLOSED HIS EYES...

...AND I WAS
STILL THERE.

IN FRONT OF HIM.

IN HIS HEAD, TOO.



BECAUSE SOMETIMES,
WHEN TWO MARBLES
COLLIDE AT GREAT
SPEED...



...THEY MERGE.



TO HELP EACH OTHER REDISCOVER A
LOVE FOR THE MOMENT AGAIN.



BECAUSE IN THIS CITY, A MOMENT
CAN LAST AN ETERNITY.



JUST LIKE THE MELANCHOLY THOSE
WHO KEEP LOOKING THE OTHER
WAY ARE FORCED TO ENDURE.



OR THE
DULL NOISE
OF CRUMBLING
DEFENSES.



LIKE THE PAIN WE
TRY TO LEAVE BEHIND.



OR THE MOST PRECIOUS
MEMORY WE CARRY WITH US
THROUGH LIFE.



LIKE THE NOTES OF THE
SAME SONG, PLAYING OVER
AND OVER AGAIN.



OR THE RHYTHMIC AND
CONSTANT SOUND OF
MASSIVE GEARS RUMBLING
BENEATH OUR FEET.



ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR...



ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR...



ONE, TWO...



THREE



FOUR.

Wait, what do you mean you're not coming back?

Sam

SAM!!!

Sam, for God's sake, I'm gonna block your credit card!

You want me to call your mother? Because I'll do it!!

Okay, you asked for it. I'm calling your mother.



Giacomo Keison Bevilacqua is an Italian-born writer and cartoonist best known for his long-running and award-winning daily comic strip *Panda Likes*, with more than twenty volumes of cartoons published in Italy, France, and Belgium, as well as numerous animated short films and popular merchandise starring the beloved character.

He began his career as a writer for comedy TV shows and stand-up at the age of 20 before transitioning to a career as a cartoonist in 2006, with *John Doe* for the publishing house Eura Editoriale. This long-running series led to illustrating other projects, such as *Homo Homini Lupus* and a G.I. Joe miniseries for IDW Publishing entitled *Future Noir*.

Following that, he moved to New York where he created his first original miniseries *Metamorphosis*, a 300-page urban fantasy thriller set in Rome. The success of this title led to his next original graphic novel, *THE SOUND OF THE WORLD BY HEART*, referencing ideas and feelings he experienced during those years in the Big Apple.

He is currently working on three new projects for 2017 and 2018, including a new adventure of the popular character Dylan Dog, a horror graphic novel titled *Lavender*, and a 720-page series called *Attica*.





CLIFF, THE BAO PUBLISHING MASCOT,
INTERPRETED BY GIACOMO BEVILACQUA.